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STRAWBERRY HILL.

VOL. II.

STRAWBERRY HILL;

AN

HISTORICAL NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"SHAKSPEARE AND HIS FRIENDS," "MAIDS OF HONOUR,"

"SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY," &c.

"Here are no assassins, no poisoners, no Neros,
Borgias, Catilines, Richards of York! Here are
the foibles of an age—no very bad one."

HORACE WALPOLE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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STRAWBERRY HILL.

CHAPTER I.

THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE'S LEVEE.

LORD BOLINGBROKE had been induced to leave his hermitage at Fontainebleau. It had become necessary for him to return to England, ostensibly to take possession of some property that had been bequeathed to him, but in reality because his devotion to philosophy in France was getting irksome, and his desire to meddle in State affairs in

England had become too strong any longer to be kept under control.

The philosopher took possession of his patrimony—a snug edifice in the classic region of Battersea—that Arcadia of cabbage-growers—that Paradise of market gardeners—that Tempe of the lovers of asparagus, rhubarb, and cos lettuces: and his last fit of distaste for public life not having quite exhausted itself, he again affected to live retired, and to exclude himself from the busy world.

Here he studied Machiavelli, Rochefaucalt, Guicciardini, and Montesquieu—here he sought to lead his intellect into the profound, the abstruse, the mysterious, and the obscure—till the delicate state of his mind had been sufficiently re-invigorated by so capital a course of intellectual asses' milk, to be able once more to enter upon a struggle with his more fortunate rival. Then the hermit of Battersea began, like an old spider awakening from the torpidity in which he had lived the winter, to re-construct his

scattered webs, and lie in wait for the prey that his instinct told him would soon be in his clutches.

Everything fell out just as this clever diplomatist desired. The grand lever in his political mechanics—the Prince of Wales—was soon as often in the neighbourhood of Battersea, as he had previously been in that of Dawley: the Tories were only too glad to avail themselves of the services of so able an engineer, not to hasten to secure them directly they were again in the market:—and many of the Whigs, who were most jealous of the superior talent of Sir Robert Walpole, were quite as anxious to secure Lord Bolingbroke's assistance in getting the great Minister out of the way.

Among the latter, the most influential were the Minister's own coadjutors, the Pelhams. The Duke of Newcastle, that *beau ideal* of empty pride and shallow pomp, could not avoid feeling a sort of degradation when his political chief came "between the wind and his nobility." His Grace fancied

it would be a vast deal better, and assuredly in every way more appropriate, for a Duke of Newcastle to be at the head of the Government, than a Sir Robert Walpole.

His brother, Mr. Pelham, a much abler man, shared his sentiments. These sentiments it was the object of the philosopher of Battersea to strengthen and encourage; and to do this he did not want either inclination or skill. In short all those agencies were telling so strongly against the Walpole interest, that the Pulteney section of "The Upper Servants' Supper Club" once more became vastly aggravating; to the increasing displeasure of the worthy butler of the First Lord of the Treasury, and the extreme indignation of the travelled valet of his son.

But perhaps we should give the reader a clearer insight into the state of things at this particular period of our story, were we to describe to him the routine of a Ministerial levee, the Minister being no other than the extremely pompous and extremely shallow Duke of Newcastle, to whom we have just

alluded. In his mansion, everything was conducted in the most stately manner. An army of footmen, among whom was our lispering acquaintance of the "Admiral Vernon," were to be met with, clad in their state liveries, placed at various intervals between the hall-door and the grand suite of apartments in which the company were allowed to assemble, all evidently in the finest possible state of servile indolence. Ushers, pages, a major-domo, and a chamberlain, were employed to attend upon visitors, from the reception rooms to the chamber of audience.

Everywhere the eye fell upon indications of the importance, the wealth, and the power of the Pelhams. If the visitor was not assured from what he beheld that they were a favoured race—the tribe of Levi, set apart for the highest political offices in the Christian community—it was no fault of the existing possessor of the Dukedom. As far as full-length portraits could go—as far as batons of command, badges of office, orders

of dignity, vestments of State, could represent greatness in a family, nothing had been left undone.

Then there were other evidences of the Pelhams being a favoured family—there were magnificent pictures on the walls, costliest services of plate on the side-boards, displays of Dresden china of almost incalculable value in cabinets, stupendous mirrors, of which the enormous frames were miracles of carving and gilding, over the mantel-pieces, and signs of excessive wealth everywhere. There was not a chair in either room that did not express, as clearly as the costliest upholsterers could convey a meaning, that in that mansion lodged a remarkable example of the great ones of the earth; there was not a table, there was not even a stool, which did not declare in equally unmistakeable hieroglyphics, that if a truly great man ever existed on the face of the globe, that great man was Thomas Pelham, Duke of Newcastle.

About noon, one warm summer's day, in

the year 1743, a considerable throng had collected in his Grace's reception-rooms. It was composed of the usual hangers-on of the family—a vast assemblage of needy expectants, who were in the habit of presenting themselves before the great man on all such occasions, to remind him, in that respectful way, of the good things he had so long led them to expect at his hands—then came the holders of his Grace's numerous boroughs, to shew that they were sufficiently grateful for his patronage—and then came as numerous a body, extremely anxious to step into their shoes in the said boroughs, as soon as the said shoes should become vacant—there were also sundry poor relations, come to feed their own pride on the prodigal display made of his, by the head of the family—and sundry rich relations, to fancy they were possessed of so much additional wealth in the magnificence, placed so ostentatiously before them, of their illustrious kinsman.

In addition might be seen a hungry crowd

of time-serving politicians, who hurried to the Minister's *levée* under the impression that there was a change about to take place in the Government which would be vastly to his advantage, and, were they in time, might be almost as much to theirs. With these, almost lost in the crowd, were several meritorious persons in search of the great man's patronage:—rising divines anxious for a benefice—learned scholars, seeking subsistence—clever artists, languishing for employment—poets, orators, pamphleteers, and critics, elbowing each other for a moderate slice of the great man's countenance and purse.

Of these, many amused themselves by wondering at the innumerable indications presented to them of their patron's power and affluence—and on most occasions this was fated to be all their enjoyment; for, after cooling their weary heels and feeding their wondering eyes for two or three hours, it was often intimated to them that his Grace would see no more company that

day, as he had an appointment with his Majesty, or was summoned to a Cabinet Council, or had gone to the House of Lords, or by making some one or other of a choice of half a hundred other excuses, equally imposing and equally false.

And then the tired applicant—the humble scholar—the active politician—the unemployed artist—the poor divine—and the rest of the curious menagerie that made up the Newcastle ark of clean and unclean beasts, made the best of their way out of the street-door, confidently expecting better fortune to attend them on their next visit—and, on the next levee, going through exactly the same profitless ceremonies.

Very little talking was allowed. In fact, scarcely any one—if he did venture to speak in so grand a domicile—dared to utter a word above his breath. The spirit of the place was a vast deal too sacred for the expression of idle gossip; and that immensely consequential person the Duke's chamberlain, in his velvet suit and sword, who was

almost as great a man as his master, would look reprovingly should any rash stranger break the stately silence so natural to such stately apartments; but should he be still so oblivious of where he was and of what he was doing, as to laugh, the chamberlain's frown would become so portentous, and the horror-struck look of the well-broken-in crowd so expressive, that the sacrilegious mirth was sure to be marvellously soon put a stop to.

A few privileged persons did indulge in an occasional observation; and it was evident the laws did not forbid such exclamations as "Beautiful!"—"Extremely fine!"—"The Duke has prodigious taste!"—"The Pelhams are a vastly illustrious family!"—Such the ushers and pages looked upon as natural as an occasional blow of the nose, an unpremeditated cough, and a spontaneous sneeze.

If any superior person chanced to be amongst the company, his superiority was obvious to the rest by the greater duration

and loudness of his observations. If he spoke in an audible whisper, he might safely be set down as an independent Member of Parliament, and most probably a Baronet; if he talked in his natural tone, he could be nothing less than a Baron—perhaps a Viscount; if he seemed very much at his ease and spoke very confidently, there could be no question of his being a Marquis or an Earl—for no one of less dignity, it was very well known, would venture to assume such a privilege.

Woe be to the luckless wight of ignoble lineage, who imprudently chose to follow the example these grandees had set him: if he whispered, he was stared out of countenance; if he spoke aloud, he was snubbed; and if he presumed to be at his ease, an intimation was quickly conveyed to him, that his Grace was so much engaged, it was quite impossible he could be seen. It mattered not that he was an estimable character—a man of talent, scholarship, and probity—a pious divine, or a matchless artist: if he infringed one of the

unalterable laws of the Newcastle etiquette, his star had waned before the gaze of the Minister—he had sunk himself irretrievably in the estimation of the glorious race of Pelham.

But we have not yet introduced to the reader this inestimable example of a statesman, who believed himself, as is said of poets in the well-known Latin adage, to be born, not made. This Porphyrogenitas of English politics was a man who, even in his height, shewed his ruling passion to make the most of himself; his red-heeled shoes elevating him, as much as was safe to the wearer, above the standard of men of his growth.

His wig was of rather modest dimensions, as though to intimate the little capacity it covered; and the satin bag behind seemed as perfect a type of the emptiness that went before it. We must say as little as possible of the coat, which was of the best material, delicately faced with gold, and ruffled with the finest lace—and of the light figured

satin vest, reaching to the hips, and ornamented with similar embroidery; neither must we be delayed by the glossy black satin small clothes, with the fine hose drawn over the knees, and the aforesaid red-heeled shoes with gold buckles.

We must call due attention to the gold hilt of the sword peeping from his Grace's skirts, and the broad ribbon of honour that crossed his chest: but our first object is the countenance, that, like a roc's egg, was evidently intended to be the last and greatest ornament Nature had allowed, when furnishing so many perfections to so great a man.

Now there happen to be physiognomies that are expressive of too much, and some that are expressive of too little. No Lavater could deny a marked individuality to the sheep, the goose and the owl; and in the human family there are occasionally met with sets of features so sheepish, goose-like, and owlsh, that they might induce a speculative physiologist to suspect—in accordance

with Lord Monboddo's theory, that men were descended from monkeys,—some might quite as rationally look for their ancestors among a flock of antediluvian wethers, or pre-Adamite geese, or still more antiquarian owls, who had the honour of hooting at such prodigious fine fellows as the Megatherium and the Ichthyosaurus, as heartily as some of their descendants do at as great monsters of our own age.

The countenance of his Grace of Newcastle was not one of these remarkable specimens of individuality—simply because it was a happy mixture of them all. The bird of Minerva never appeared more owlsh—no sheep's head on a block ever presented itself so *àpropos de mouton*; and had he lived in the days of Macbeth, there is no question that his hail by that illustrious personage would always have been, "Where gottest thou that goose look?"

It was during one of his levees, when the reception rooms were most crowded, that the Duke was sitting in a crimson velvet chair of

state, in a small apartment richly decorated. On these occasions he chose to be seated, as a position affording a greater display of dignity than was possible of attainment by a man of his awkward, scrambling, shuffling gait, when on his legs. There was a fine full-length portrait of the King on one side of the room, and an equally fine full-length of the Duke on the opposite side; the walls were so near—the state robes of each so similar—and they looked so affectionately at each other, that they might easily have been mistaken for the immortal kings of Brentford, smelling at one rose.

Letters bearing the royal seal, almost as large as a moderate-sized warming-pan, lay on the table, with various bundles of official-looking papers, addressed in a Brobdignagian character, to his Grace the Duke of Newcastle, &c. &c., with all his titles at full length; and there were writing implements of a very costly kind, having the armorial bearings of the Pelhams fully displayed.

On this point we may as well add here,

that for fear any visitor should enter the house in ignorance of the quality of the owner, the ducal coronet stared him in the face from every object that attracted his attention; it flashed upon him from the saucepan-lid-like silver buttons of the lacqueys—it blazed from the gilt tops of the mirrors—it even spread its glory in the embroidery on the foot-stools. It was quite impossible any one could for an instant doubt where he was, when so much care was taken to shew him that he had entered the temple of the Grand Llama of English politics.

The great man was seated very much at his ease—as so very great a man should be—listening with an air intended to be a well-balanced union of stateliness with condescension, to a man who, it was evident, had been making a struggle to put on the outward characteristics of a gentleman; but it was clear, even to the full-blown porter who gave him entrance to the mansion, on receiving his last crown piece, that his coat had been brushed too much by a great deal, and that

the smoothness of the plain three-cornered cocked-hat he held under his arm, as he stood bowing to the Minister, was equally independent of nap.

Yet there was a fire in his sunken eye, and an expression on his faded cheek, that spoke of something within, in a much more respectable state of preservation than his clean, yet threadbare suit. There was a storehouse of fine thoughts, that only wanted the hand of patronage to be thrown open to the enjoyment of the whole world; there was a vast reservoir of sweet feeling, that merely waited for the same judicious assistance, to place its refreshing waters at the disposal of every human heart.

“I have ventured to apply to your Grace once more,” commenced the great poet—for such he was—in a faltering voice to the great man, “on the subject of that appointment your Grace did me the honour to say I should receive, as soon as the proper arrangements could be made.”

“Yes — Mister — Mister?” (His Grace

invariably forgot the name of every untitled person who came before him.) “Mr. ——. Bless me, I forget; but I see so many persons, that really—their names—”

“Bayes, my Lord Duke.”

“Oh yes; I remember perfectly,” said his Grace, with a gentle wave of his jewelled hand, and an equally gentle smile, “your name ’s Blaze; you wrote a fine poem—marvellous fine poem—in a patriotic spirit—prodigious patriotic speech.”

This commendation from so illustrious a source might have been extremely agreeable to the neglected genius, had he not, in each of the dozen audiences to which he had been admitted by his anticipated patron, heard it repeated in exactly the same words, even to the mistake of his name.

“You are still engaged on your great work, I suppose; eh, Mr. Blaze?” inquired the Duke; and then looking with a degree of sapience that would have put the bird of Minerva out of countenance, he added, “Delightful employment, that of writing

poetry—prodigious delightful!—employing the human intellect in a fine field of speculation—marvellous fine field.”

The poet ought to have been pleased to hear this appreciation of his studies; but unfortunately the sentences were as familiar to him as those which had preceded them.

“The poem has been completed some time,” quietly replied Mr. Bayes—a piece of information he had been in the habit of repeating on every visit during the last six months.

“I am glad to hear it—prodigious glad to hear it!” said his Grace, with a bland smile, “I have no doubt in the world ’tis a fine work—marvellous fine work.”

So decided an opinion from so exalted a patron, ought to have been encouraging to any man of genius; but the luckless poet had heard it too often not to be perfectly aware of its very little value. The Duke had evidently a stereotyped set of phrases for all applicants, to whom he brought them

out in regular succession as they were wanted. But Mr. Bayes required something more substantial than words. He had been made to live upon hope for a long time, but such Poor-Law-Union diet was beginning to tell fearfully upon his attenuated frame.

He had been led on to expect the great man would do something for him, that should for ever place him above the reach of want, till he had parted with his last coin; and now the desperateness of his case urged him to appeal more strongly than he had hitherto dared to do, to the great man who had assumed to be his patron.

"I must venture to remind your Grace," recommenced the poor poet more firmly, "of the promise you were so kind as to make me, when I first had the honour of presenting myself in this room. At various times since then, your Grace has led me to believe that a comfortable post was in your gift. My circumstances are such as to render such generosity on the part of your

Grace, to a friendless man of letters, as seasonable as the prospect of it is agreeable. It has become vitally necessary that I should urge your Grace to the immediate fulfilment of your kind wishes in my behalf: and your Grace may rest assured I shall not be deficient in gratitude."

During this speech it was curious to mark the physiognomical changes the Duke chose to exhibit. On being reminded of his promise, the sapient look gave way to a particularly sheepish one; and when he learned that the fulfilment of it was regarded as a matter that could not be delayed, the visage changed to something very goose-like indeed.

"Oh! ah! yes, Mister Blaze," said the Duke, in a hesitating voice, "there might have been something said of my doing something for you when an opportunity presented itself. I shall be very happy to serve a person of your worth—prodigious happy—but you see I have a great number of applications of the same sort—marvellous number.

It 's quite impossible I can find places for everybody: but on the very first vacancy, rely on my good offices. I am always glad to be of service to a man of genius like yourself—prodigious glad. Don't forget to present yourself at my next levee: but just now you must excuse me—the Cabinet meet to-day—important affairs of State—marvellous important—good morning, Mr. Blaze!"

"Pumps," exclaimed his Grace, as that monstrous important personage, his Grace's chamberlain, entered the room, after the dismissal of the hapless poet.

"I wait your Grace's orders," replied that functionary, in an extremely deferential manner.

"Tell the groom of the chambers to desire one of the pages to command the head footman to tell the porter not to let that fellow in again who has just left me," said the head of the house of Pelham, in a tone and with a manner, to the pompousness of which it is impossible to do justice.

"Your Grace's commands shall be attended

to immediately," answered the Chamberlain, with a bow that might have passed for the genuflexion of an Eastern Vizier before the Commander of the Faithful.

"Paltry scribbler!" muttered the great man, as he crossed one knee over the other, with the look of a goose certainly, but of one whose feathers had been ruffled by a rude attempt to pluck a quill at his expense. To be reminded of a promise, the Minister looked upon as a piece of impertinence that could not be too severely punished.

"Pumps," cried his Grace again.

"I wait your Grace's orders," replied the well-drilled Chamberlain.

"Whose turn comes next?"

"Young Mr. Lackwit and old Mr. Lackwit, please your Grace," answered the obsequious Pumps, "with a letter of introduction for the former from the Earl of Spoonbill."

"Let them enter."

In a few minutes there entered the chamber a respectable-looking elderly man, accompanied by his son, a tall gawky youth,

who looked half pleased and half frightened as he approached the great man.

“I have the honour of bearing a letter from the Right Honourable the Earl of Spoonbill to his Grace the Duke of Newcastle,” commenced the elder gentleman: “it is respecting my son. This is my son, please your Grace.” His Grace looked in the desired direction, and made the very slightest inclination of the head.

“The noble Earl has taken the greatest interest in my son, and in fact, I may say, in the whole family, who I trust are sufficiently proud and grateful for his condescension. His Lordship is desirous that my son should be personally known to your Grace, hoping that it may be in your Grace’s power to obtain him some little sinecure, or post of sufficient income. My son is twenty-one, please your Grace, and I will venture to say will never discredit your Grace’s patronage.”

The Duke quietly took the letter, and quietly opened it, while the foregoing speech

was being perpetrated. He appeared to cast his eye over its contents, but he never troubled himself to read a line of it.

“My friend the Earl of Spoonbill has placed me under a great obligation,” began the Duke, with quite an owlish gravity, “in recommending to my notice persons of your worth. I am glad to have it in my power to be of service to a family of such respectability as the”—

“Lackwits, please your Grace,” said the elder applicant quickly. “L—a—c—k—w—i—t—s,” he added, slowly repeating every letter.

“I am glad to have it in my power to be of service to a family of such respectability as the Lackfits—prodigious glad,” repeated he, in the manner of a school-boy going over his lesson when corrected. “I shall bear your claims in mind whenever an opportunity presents itself; but you must be aware that, holding the high position I do in his Majesty’s councils, I have a vast number of applicants for my favour—a marvellous number. Depend on

it I will not lose sight of a person recommended to me by a nobleman so high in my esteem as my Lord Spoonbill. I should consider it the greatest happiness of my life to oblige his Lordship. I am delighted at having the opportunity of shewing the regard I have for him—prodigious delighted. Pray don't forget to present yourselves at my *levées*—but at present I know you will excuse me, when I assure you affairs of State, of importance—marvellous importance—demand my attention.”

The Lackwits were dismissed, and they were succeeded by several visitors of a similar description, who came either with the hope of getting something, or to remind their illustrious patron of something having been promised them. It was singular to notice the unvarying regularity of the great man's proceedings in all these cases; how systematically all his cut-and-dried phrases, and his well-preserved looks, came out at the proper inoment. The same sentences dovetailed so nicely into every case, that nothing

could appear more spontaneous and appropriate; and the same manner was accorded with so nice a sense of justice towards all, that no one could boast of preference or complain of prejudice.

After the Minister had disposed of these, the chamberlain announced Sir Gregory Bumptious. Now, Sir Gregory Bumptious was an independent Member of Parliament, with a loud voice and a high spirit, of commanding figure, and having a way with him which gave every one reason to believe, that if he wished to offend the gentleman, the gentleman would meet him half way and thrash him the rest.

“Your Servant, my Lord Duke.”

“Pumps, set a chair. Glad to see you, Sir Gregory — prodigious glad. I hope Lady Bumptious enjoys her usual good health? I saw her at Court t’other day, looking quite blooming—marvellous blooming. The King very seldom notices ladies — prodigious seldom ;—but his Majesty seemed quite taken with the very lady-like

manners of Lady Bumptious—marvellous lady-like.”

Sir Gregory Bumptious had entered the great man’s cabinet in rather an angry mood, at some neglect that had been shewn a recommendation of his; but so flattering a notice of his wife—who happened to be a remarkably fussy, ill-featured woman—mollified him considerably. This effect, however, would not have been produced, had Sir Gregory been aware that the speech he had just heard was one the great man addressed invariably to all his married visitors of a certain grade.

“The King’s mighty good to have such an opinion of my wife,” said the softened high-spirited county Member.

“I protest his Majesty has a high opinion of you, Sir Gregory—prodigious high opinion,” resumed the Duke, following up his advantage, “It was only t’other day he was saying to me, ‘Sir Gregory Bumptious speaks well in the House—marvellous well.’”

If there was anything that Sir Gregory Bumptious prided himself upon, it was his oratory—most probably because he was a very bad speaker; and this allusion—from such exalted authority, too—to his speech-making, so smoothed his temper, that all feeling of dissatisfaction evaporated, and he was never in a more agreeable humour in his life. The case would have been altered considerably, had the irate Baronet been aware, that when called upon by a Member of the Lower House, the Duke of Newcastle invariably hazarded the same harmless fib respecting the royal appreciation of his eloquence.

“I must say, his Majesty is extremely condescending,” exclaimed the gratified Sir Gregory, evidently in a humour, like Bottom the Weaver, to “roar as gently as a sucking dove.”

“Oh, not at all; the King has a great regard for you—prodigious regard,” quickly put in the great man; and then as if anxious to make the most of his advantage, he

added, "By the way, that reminds me, I have an appointment with his Majesty—must be in the palace in twenty minutes. Hope you 'll excuse me; good morning, Sir Gregory."

After this departure there were announced Ensign and Lady Squash. The latter, a languishing fine lady of fashion, in the extreme of the *mode*, and a well-defined hoop, overflowing with perfumery and affectations; and the other a sickly-looking youth, her son, dressed in regimentals, and appearing anything but a hero.

If, as a great man has stated, gratitude is "a lively sense of favours to come," my Lady Squash was exceedingly grateful to her powerful friend. Throughout her simpering it was very apparent, that her Ladyship expected, through the Duke's influence, that her lout of a boy should become a general; and a very beautiful specimen of the adaptitude of means to an end, might again have been observed in the application of the Minister's stock of phrases. He went through the

regular routine, and in due time Ensign and Lady Squash were got rid of.

They were succeeded by a motley group of all kinds and complexions. A plethoric Dean, sighing for a Bishoprick—a spendthrift Peer, begging for a pension—an unemployed General, seeking for a regiment—a needy Courtier, anxious for a post—wealthy Country Gentlemen, in search of baronetcies—and still more wealthy City Merchants, in quest of the honours of knighthood. To all the Minister meted out his patronage, as though he had apportioned each his share to a grain.

The next announcement, there could be little doubt, was one of no ordinary nature, from the astonishment caused by the mention of the name. The groom of the chambers certainly said “Viscount Bolingbroke;” and sure enough, in a very few seconds, the philosopher of Battersea entered the apartment.

The Duke of Newcastle had distributed his courtesies in a fine graduated scale, that

shewed the gradations of his estimation very distinctly. This, however, was his practice when giving separate audiences; but when entering his levee-room, he affected the popular to such an extent, that he went shuffling and scrambling on like a polar bear amongst a kennel of hounds, giving every one a hug that came in his way.

When receiving persons in his cabinet, nobodies were forced to stand during their audience—people of some note were allowed to seat themselves—persons of quality had the honour of shaking hands with the Minister: but an unusual distinction was conferred by him upon the philosophical statesman, fresh from his hermitage. On him he conferred the extraordinary honour of rising from his seat as his visitor advanced towards him. In short, Lord Bolingbroke obtained a very cordial reception. It was clear, two such very warm friends had rarely met; and yet most true it is, notwithstanding their extremely friendly ex-

pressions, in their secret thoughts one thought the other a most desperate ass, and the ass thought his dear friend a monstrous sly fox.

There was a curious and very marked contrast distinguishable in the appearance of these worthies of the last century. The fine person, the noble countenance, the polished urbanity of Bolingbroke, were seen to vast advantage beside the vulgar figure, the pompous courtesy, and shuffling, scrambling gait of his Grace of Newcastle. The former was a man marked out by nature as a leader and counsellor, that would unquestionably have taken a distinguished position in his peculiar sphere, whether that had placed him amongst the unlettered savages of the new world, or the wisest and ablest statesmen of the old. But it was quite as evident that the other, whether his fortunes had been cast amongst savage or civilized, could never have been anything more than could have been achieved for him by the recommendation of tattooing or tailoring.

The result of this interview we are not at liberty to communicate. Suffice it to say, that an *entente cordiale* was soon established between these two great men, and this was based on their cordial hatred of Sir Robert Walpole.

In the hands of so able an intriguer as Bolingbroke, the Duke was a mere puppet. It was in vain he strove to look as wise as the bird of wisdom; he could not help occasionally looking as foolish as the bird of folly, when he was made to feel the supremacy of the spirit of his companion. His cut-and-dried phrases were, as usual, brought out in their proper order; but on such a mind as Bolingbroke's they dropped like flakes of snow upon a mountain stream—they fell without leaving the slightest vestige of their existence.

The clever plotter divested the head of the house of Pelham of all the defences his stately ceremonies had cast around him, and brought him helplessly into a net, which he cast over his head with the dexterity of an

ancient gladiator. The end of the conference was, that the Pelhams were engaged, heart and soul, with the philosopher of Battersea, for the overthrow of the obnoxious First Lord of the Treasury.

CHAPTER II.

WALPOLE CORRESPONDENCE.

*The Honourable Major Conway to Horatio
Walpole, Esq., M.P.*

“DEAR HORACE,—The art of war here is going on as spiritedly as a duck-hunt—heroes are as common as tenpenny nails on a carpenter’s bench, and seem quite as ready to be knocked on the head. I know not exactly who was the first soldier—that is to say, who invented war—but whoever he was, he must have been a rare fellow in his way; he must have been one of those great men before

Agamemnon, according to the old classic phrase, who, having been driven desperate by ill-treatment, assembled his rank and file by beat of drum, and with flags flying and fifes playing, began a campaign by driving in the advanced posts of the enemy, and forcing his positions.

“This may be very true, you will say, but not peculiarly interesting. You would doubtless prefer to learn what is going on amongst our Allies abroad at this present writing. The state of warfare in the infancy of the world will be a very good subject of study when it is in its dotage. But never mind, as the poet truly says, and as I as truly repeat:

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in thy philosophy.”

And thy philosophy, I believe, is pretty comprehensive—embracing everything, from the vast girdle of the earth, to the little one of some Cynthia of the minute, who has attractions enough to please your somewhat fastidious taste.

“ But, *àpropos* of love-making—I should monstrously like to know how you are getting on with Lady Archibald. The thing is not exactly proper, I admit, but then you are not so great a reprobate as our friend Charley, who, on having been found entertaining himself with a certain pretty married woman attached to the Townshend establishment, when reminded of the wrong he was doing, stoutly averred that he had not ‘coveted’ according to the Decalogue; the individual being *his own man’s wife*, instead of another man’s.

“ I doubt my Lady Archie is satisfied with her armorial bearings, though she is entitled to use those of her husband’s ducal house—for there is reason to believe that she has long been in the habit of quartering the royal arms with her own: whether she is anxious for an addition from the Walpole heraldry—rampant, couchant, or regardant, must be better known to yourself than to me.

“ When was George Selwyn last awake?—

I suspect he is setting up for a wit, and desires to be a sleeping partner in some joking firm.

“But what has become of Gray? He seems to have got away from all his old friends.

“Is Hanbury Williams writing ballads, or negotiating treaties?

“You must be sure and let me know how you are going on with your inestimable progenitor. I have a vast opinion of him. There must be something very great in a man, to be so greatly abused as Sir Robert has been. Like the flying fish, he appears to have as many enemies above as below him. But if I am not hugely mistaken, he will shew them abundance of sport before he becomes the prey of either.

“There is a little fish I have read of, who, when in danger, discolours the water around him, and leaves his enemy to flounder in a mess in which he cannot see an inch beyond his nose. I think our worthy friend has recourse to such tactics occasionally, and

that his skill in evading the approaches of his numerous foes, by disturbing the current along which they are floating so confidently, till they find it impossible to get at him, will always keep him out of any immediate danger.

“For your sake I wish him a good quit-tance of all such troublesome customers. But I wonder you don’t do something to let him know the sort of stuff you are made of. What have you been about all this time? I think the good burgesses of that Cornish borough of yours, where I had so much amusement, have some reason to complain. I should hardly think that you had fulfilled their expectations. Nay, I don’t know but what that fellow Briggs would have made a more useful Member.

“I have thus far written for my own amusement, but now I must add something for yours; and acquaint you with the state of things in this part of the world. Know, then, that we have had a good deal of marching and some fighting—enough, assuredly,

to save his Britannic Majesty the reproach attached to that heroic monarch, who, according to the Chronicles, 'marched up the hill, and then marched down again.'

"As I am an aide-de-camp of our young Duke of Cumberland, who, I am bound to say, seems quite as much a soldier as his royal father, I have seen a good deal of what has been going on, and more than once have shewn the enemy that your friend Harry Conway has no objection to a little comfortable fighting. Always on horseback, bearing orders from my General, and frequently when different regiments are engaged, and the bullets are flying about like a storm of hail, and the whole field is swallowed up in a monstrous cloud, choked with gun-powder, deafened with artillery, blinded with smoke, I rush on to the officer with whom I have to communicate, to the music of groans, trumpets, drums, and thunder, wherever he may be.

"It matters not that he is engaged with the enemy: where he goes, I must follow. I

find him in the midst of his men, cutting his way to fame, but I must interrupt his carving, well as he may be doing it, to make him listen to me. The next moment I am either directing my way to some other position, in the same picturesque break-neck style, or dashing back the way I came, bearing the report of the officer with whom I have communicated.

“If my horse and I return with a whole skin each, we, or rather I do for my four-footed friend, thank Providence and the French marksmen: but this is such good fortune as we cannot always expect. If we bear with us a bullet or two, the best thing we can do is to find a surgeon; and if our case is not very bad, we may expect to have to repeat the same kind of amusement as soon as agreeable to the enemy.

“But now it is high time to tell you what we have been doing. Our forces, consisting of English, Hanoverians, Hessians, and some Austrian regiments, having Lord Stair as Commander-in-Chief, were on the north bank

of the Maine, when the Duke de Noailles, with a powerful French army, approached on the southern bank. This was rather a delicate position for the forces of France and England to be in, considering that war had not yet been declared between the two countries—nevertheless, it was evident the several commanders only waited a proper moment to commence hostilities.

“The General of the Allies, finding himself not strong enough to cope with the French, chose to fall back, with the view of obtaining reinforcements from Hanover; but the French were so quickly on his heels, and the dispositions of their General were so excellent, that he cut us off from our magazine at Hanau, where was our bread and forage—intercepted our communications with Franconia, whence we might have derived our supplies—and cooped us up in a narrow valley that runs along the river Maine, from the town of Aschaffenburg to the large village of Dettingen.

“In this desperate state of affairs I arrived

at the scene of war with the King, the Duke of Cumberland, and Lord Carteret, from Hanover. Our forces were reduced to 37,000 men—very nearly half-starved—the men nearly without food, and the horses almost without forage. The Hessians and Hanoverians, from whom we had been cut off, were not in much better plight, and were marching upon Hanau.

“The King, after several councils of war, finding his army threatened in flank and rear, batteries rising on the river, and starvation threatening everywhere, resolved to break out of the trap in which he had been enclosed, and forming the army into two columns he set them in motion in the direction of the defile of Dettingen, where, unknown to him, the Duke de Grammont awaited his advance with 23,000 men. His Majesty commanded in the rear, which he believed to be the post of danger, till he beheld the sudden halt of his columns; his advanced posts rapidly falling back upon the main army, and the French apparently

in great force in the Dettingen pass. The King rapidly rode to the front, arranged his men in order of battle, infantry supported by cavalry, and prepared to force his way.

“It was high time he did so : for a division of the enemy, 12,000 strong, was close upon his rear ; their commander was bringing up other formidable bodies of men, and his flank was being played upon by the batteries on the banks of the Maine. Young De Grammont did not wait for his uncle, the Duke de Noailles, but with a terrible uproar advanced with all his force to attack the Allies. The noise frightened the King’s horse, who ran away with his rider, and in all probability would have carried him into the French lines, when, luckily for his Majesty and for all of us, he was stopped, and the King, dismounting, placed himself at the head of his British and Hanoverian infantry, flourished his sword, and made a speech, which, as I happened to be on his left, where the Duke of Cumberland had placed himself, I heard very distinctly.

“ ‘Now, my boys,’ said he, ‘now for the honour of England. Fire, and behave bravely, and the French will soon run.’

“ This oration may not be quite so classical as those Cæsar or Hannibal addressed to their troops previously to a battle, but it was quite as much to the purpose.

“ On came Grammont and his cavalry, making a brilliant charge, creating at first some little confusion; but as the batteries had ceased firing, from not being able to distinguish friends from foes, the King formed his infantry into one dense column, and placing himself at their head, with his son beside him, made one overwhelming charge upon the enemy. Horse and foot gave way before it—a panic seized the French—the English rushed with sword and bayonet upon their foes, as they crowded in disorder towards the bridges, where multitudes were killed or drowned in the river; and a vast number, finding no hope of escape, surrendered without striking a blow.

“Thus ended the Battle of Dettingen, with a loss to the French of 6000 men, to the Allies of 2000. The King and the Duke were in the thick of the fight, and bore themselves bravely—the latter refusing to leave the field, though wounded in the leg. Though we fought upon empty stomachs, we shewed ourselves monstrous stout-hearted. The victory was not a very profitable one; yet its results were eminently satisfactory to all, as soon as we became aware, that although the French had managed to deprive us of our bread, we had contrived to ‘save our bacon.’

“We subsequently marched upon Hanau, where we found plenty of every thing but the enemy, and the expected reinforcements from Hanover. We are now strong enough to turn upon Noailles; but as yet nothing has been decided on, except that it is necessary for Lord Stair to fall out with every body, because his advice is not followed to bring things to such a pretty pass as that we managed to fight our way out of.

“I have now only to add, that I hacked away at the Monsieurs with such industry, that I have been thought worthy of promotion, and may consider myself to hold a respectable place in the favour of his Majesty and the Duke, who have expressed themselves very warmly in my behalf. I have no doubt I shall do very well, if the subjects of the King of France throw none of their warlike impediments in my career. But I ’ll not think of anything so disastrous, my custom being very different. No one knows better than yourself how much I am in the habit of looking at the bright side of things.

“Believe me ever, your faithful Friend,

“And affectionate Kinsman,

“HARRY CONWAY.”

Horatio Walpole, Esq., M.P., to the Honourable Colonel Conway.

“DEAR HARRY,—We are all here in ecstasies about Dettingen. Every body talks

about it. Every one boasts of it. Like the air we breathe, it seems impossible to open one's mouth without its being full of it. And then all the town are outstriving each other, endeavouring to possess the most memorials of so agreeable an occurrence. We have Dettingen muffs, and Dettingen cuffs; Dettingen wigs, and Dettingen jigs; Dettingen jugs, and Dettingen rugs; Dettingen fans, and Dettingen pans. Night-caps, buckles, gloves, boots, ruffles, and three-legged stools, all bear the same inspiriting name—nay more, the old pie-man, who frequents the Strand, has been bit by the same folly, and invites his patriotic customers to purchase his Dettingen mutton pies, and Dettingen kidney puddings.

“And so ‘Great George our King’ is a hero! The age of miracles has come back to us. How true is that fine text, for those who are not possessed of a sanguine temperament—‘Blessed are they who expect nothing.’ I am sure my anticipations were like those of Lady Betty Fitzfumble before

she was made bone of old Fitz's very osteological proportions—of the most moderate description. But, of course, I gulp my astonishment, and shout my admiration as loudly as the best of 'em. I am ready to swear that General George Guelph is a second Cæsar. Indeed, had he lived in more classical times, instead of merely beating the French, I am ready to aver—deny it who dare—he would have been pursuing so comprehensive a career of conquest, that, like Alexander the Great, he would at last have been obliged to sigh for more worlds to conquer. Hurrah for King George!

“The most pleasant part of this agreeable news to me is the intelligence of your safety. I have no objection to a victory, or any other English luxury. I like thrashing the subjects of the King of France, quite as much as a loyal subject of the King of England is bound to do; but the victory would be regarded by me as a monstrous dear purchase, if it could only be had at the cost of Harry Conway. I will

not conceal from you that there are some amongst you whom I could spare with infinitely less regret. My Lord Stair, now, if he had joined the shades of the heroes, I should have felt a sort of satisfaction at his having made so soldier-like an end: but I suppose the aforesaid shades do not fancy Scotchmen, or approve of such bungling heroes. I trust, however, before he can lead our armies into such another trap, they may be brought to look more kindly on his merits—whatever they are.

“ You have asked me so many questions, and given me so many themes, that my reply ought to be a volume instead of a letter; but let us begin at the beginning—as a great authority has recommended,—and I have no doubt I shall be helped along wonderfully by the conviction I entertain, with many other equally sensible people, that there must be an end to all things.

“ As to my Lady Archibald, she is mighty civil. I might be disposed to appreciate her attentions, were I not so well satisfied

that she employs her civility, just as any other trader would do, to increase her custom. Her serving the royal family may be a recommendation to her goods; but it so happens, I am rather difficult to please; and I would prefer in some things being my own caterer, to following in the footsteps of any prince in Christendom.

“I scribble occasionally, as you know. You remember the fair Venus we met at Lady Caroline Fitzroy’s, of whom George Selwyn said that the swain who desired to find favour in her eyes must be that inveterate gambler ‘who sets his soul upon a *cast*.’ We are on mighty good terms;—so I made her the subject of the following verses.

LINES ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY WITH
A CERTAIN PECULIARITY OF VISION.

“ Lady, when gazing on your face,
I scarce can my emotion smother,
To mark that unaccustomed grace,
That looks one way and sees another.

“ Even as I gaze, their curious freaks
Your flashing orbs are now revealing ;
For while on me one sunbeam breaks,
The other frolics o’er the ceiling !

“ Unnatural gifts few men can brook,
And yours the hardest have affrighted ;
For those who always two ways look,
May boast of being second-sighted !

“ But if my merits you prefer,
Stern should I be as Aristarchus,
Did I not full content aver,
Looked you as many ways as Argus.”

“ Our fellows are variously occupied. Gray has just published a volume of poems which has had immense success, and George Selwyn, in his waking moments, has perpetrated a series of jests, the result of which has been equally satisfactory. The rest are to be met with here and there and everywhere, buzzing about like flies in search of sweets, and dropping into every place where they are least expected. Charley Townshend has been setting Rainham into convulsions, by some jest of his which was of that risible quality, it was almost enough to have tickled the family vault.

“There is a vast deal of pleasantry in these Townshends. His Lady mother rivals Charley in the quaintness of her sayings and doings. Like a Sheffield twenty-bladed knife, she is all points. I don’t know how she can sheathe herself when she goes into the society of her fine lady associates, so as to prevent hurting those who meddle with her. She must be amongst them like a porcupine in the midst of a pack of silky spaniels; and make her dearest female friends, after a prolonged association, suffer from an attack of that malady which is usually explained in the description—feeling all over like needles and pins.

“Do you know, Harry, I have been trying to lose my own identity—no great loss perhaps, after all; for it is likely enough any one who found what I strove to part with, would think it hardly worth appropriating; but the fact is, I have been leading the life of a man of fashion, till I began to fear I had degenerated into a forked radish in a well-cut coat and inexpressibles. I found

myself one day, after undergoing a surfeit of fooleries, in a fit of disgust, mentally asking myself what my father must think of my extraordinary, or rather ordinary conduct.

“ While he was battling with difficulties of every description—displaying the highest intellectual energy—providing for every contingency that might affect the prosperity of a nation,—I was sauntering at auctions—lingering at masquerades—yawning at operas—gossiping at ridottos—and playing the fool every where. I thought, ‘Why should I be at the beck and call of Lady this, and Miss t’other?—talking nonsense to every pretty face, as if I had become a priest in the temple of Beauty, and was employed in offering every idol the necessary incense;—Why should Horace Walpole, of his own free will, remain a galley-slave at the oar of Folly; and help, with all his strength, to row the gaudy vessel down the stream of Time?’

“ And again the thought returned to me, that I was doing this, with so noble an example before me of what might be done—

of what might be attained by talent rightly directed—which example I had been in the habit, from my earliest youth, of holding before my admiring gaze, with a resolution, strong as death, to follow in the same footsteps—to rival in the same merit. And this resolution I had allowed to lay dormant till the energies that might have advanced me far in my course, were nearly dead for want of use.

“It was true my pride had been humbled, and my vanity hurt, by the discovery of the very trifling estimation in which I was held, by one whose approval I so highly appreciated: but I now, for the first time, awoke to a consciousness that this approval could only be the further off, by my removing myself from that sphere of usefulness and honour in which I so earnestly desired to move. If he thought little of me when a young man, aspiring for honourable employment, he would think much less when I had become a mere maccaroni—a shallow pretender to fashion—an empty cox-

comb, who had nothing to boast of but his wearing apparel.

“I felt like Sampson bound by green withes. I snapped my fashionable bonds as though they were so many threads;—balls, operas, routs, masquerades, auctions, and plays, should now be of as little importance to me as the innumerable fair dames with whom I had been in the habit of associating. I would not abandon the pleasures of the world, and live the life of a hermit; simply because a diet of herbs, and water from the spring, with the uninterrupted enjoyment of my own thoughts, do not form a bill of fare exactly to my taste; but I would partake moderately of every enjoyment in which a gentleman is expected to indulge, and shew the world in which I mingled that I would do it no discredit, and it should do me no injury.

“Any distinction in the State, I felt, must come through the hands of him who had it so completely at his disposal. I could not urge my claims to him—I was anxious he

should find them out. There was another path open to me, in which I should not require his assistance—where success could not fail of attracting his attention; and, were that once gained, I doubted not everything else I desired was easy of attainment. My determination was made.

“Harry, I have made up my mind to become a man of letters. And, as the most necessary step in this direction, I have begun to write a book. Yes, I sit down every day, pen in hand, to put my ideas upon paper, full of the resolution of attaining some respectable, if not lofty position up the hill of Fame. It would astonish you mightily to see what I am about—to observe the peculiar structure which, with the help of a printing press, I intend to set up before the public gaze, to convince them of what vast things I am capable of.

“Perhaps you will laugh at the idea of my writing a romance, as a recommendation to one of the most unromantic men in England; but I hold in due respect the praise

of small beginnings towards great undertakings. The book is for the multitude, who scramble for novelties of this kind as greedily as pigs for acorns; and I shall take care to make it wonderful enough to astonish the most indifferent of my readers.

“ I will confess to you, I am visited by a perspective, when reflecting on the results of its publication, almost as brilliant as that of the hopeful Alnaschar over his basket of brittle ware; and the vision is so engrossing, that, were it possible, my kicking down the materials of my future greatness would follow as a matter of course. I will also admit that the princess of the Arabian tale has her representative in my glowing vision; but instead of spurning her, I should be much more likely to make the sort of mischievous stumble that brings about the catastrophe, when rushing to clasp her to my arms.

“ You know nothing of the heroine of this exquisite dream. She is a memorial of the Past I have never dared to mention, even to

so dear a friend as yourself. Till lately, I have as little ventured to remind myself of her existence. Yet, the little I can remember of genuine happiness is so indissolubly connected with her name, that all my manhood seems one dreary blank, deprived of it. And my strange destiny insists upon this deprivation—ay, insists, that the light which illumed the fairest hours of my existence should be put out, and leave my retrospection in utter darkness.

“To tell you how much I have been led on, in the composition of this romance, by a desire to write a work which should be admired by her whose praise seemed to me the sweetest fame poet ever won, is no easy task. It is curious enough that I have long been teaching myself to forget her; and yet, at every admirable passage that flows from my pen, I keep anticipating her admiration with an intensity of gratification, that proves how wonderfully I appreciate it.

“But it is but a melancholy interest I enjoy in the cultivation of these fancies: I

am only too well aware that my name or fame can be to her nothing more than an echo of a pleasant sound. When I first gave myself up to the bewildering delirium of loving a creature so infinitely raised above her species, I was well aware that, sooner or later, the dark shadow of worldly prejudices would come between us, and separate us for ever. But it was with my story as with one of those beautiful fables found in the fairy legends of different countries, where mortal man cultivates a passion for spiritual maiden, with the full knowledge of an insurmountable barrier to its consummation. I could not liberate myself from the fascinations that held me to this superior being, till its existence was acknowledged by herself.

“Many months have passed over since we parted—in the mutual conviction, that for us the Future had no promise—the Present no pleasure—the Past no profit. Since then I have endeavoured to harden my heart in that petrifying well, the world; but I have not been so successful as most people who

have tried the same process. Possibly their hearts were previously so worldly as to require very little hardening to turn them into stone.

“It appeared as though the intellectual labour in which I am engaged had again brought my nature in communion with her; and my heart, instead of becoming a petrification, had thrown off the thin crust which had there been deposited by that vast well of Knaresborough, within the influence of which I have been living; and that every day I was reversing the process, and every day becoming more sensible of the exquisite vitality of my former state.

“You will not wonder, then, with what abundant ecstasy I give wings to my imagination, and take my flight through the regions of romance, buoyant with the belief that I am approaching her. It may be all a delusion and a mockery, as sober moments always represent; but it affords me a stimulus, without which I should be little better than a clod: and, if it be a cheat, it is

one a thousand times more 'pleasing than ordinary realities.

“ Should I never enjoy again the sunshine of her presence, which unromantic matter of fact never ceases to proclaim to me, there will be no slight gratification in the knowledge that she will find a companion in my work — through which she will become acquainted with my thoughts—that cannot conceal from her that her worth is impressed, however faintly, in everything admirable of which those thoughts afford any trace.

“ Ever your affectionate Cousin,

“ HORATIO WALPOLE.”

CHAPTER III.

THE RIDOTTO IN THE HOUSEKEEPER'S ROOM.

“La! Mrs. Jenny, how can you say so! I declare to you I was in another place at the pacific time you mentioned.”

This little speech was uttered by a portly, well-fed, middle-aged woman, dressed extravagantly *à-la-mode*, possessed of black languishing eyes, a pair of cheeks extremely well rouged, and bearing at least three different patches; a large and ruddy mouth, and a nose that was evidently a cross be-

tween a pointer and a pug. Her head was lavishly adorned with ribbons, and she wore a large necklace of tawdry beads upon a neck, the ample proportions of which would have been much better protected by a kerchief.

But the neck of Mrs. Susan was not, like that of the swan or the giraffe, out of proportion with the body to which it belonged. Mrs. Susan was a sort of Juno below stairs, and, in her swelling shape, displayed the full-blown dignity of a *Housekeeper grandiflora*—as the classical gardeners of the present day would not fail of specifying such a magnificent plant as the very important housekeeper of the very important Duke of Newcastle.

The good woman was not so young as she had been; but it was quite clear she had no intention, however past her youth, of allowing her fascinations to be kept in the background; for she might still boast of good looks, and, among the flowers of the kitchen garden, had an attractive, sun-

flower sort of bloom, that rarely failed of exciting observation.

But then her manners did her, as she fancied, no slight service. She was wonderfully genteel in her notions—even for a middle-aged housekeeper. This she evinced in nothing more clearly than in her choice of language, which, though the terms were often very curiously placed, would have done no discredit to her ducal master in his most stately mood.

“As I live, Mrs. Jenny, you are prodigious scandalous. Indeed, you appear sometimes to have so little regard for truth, that, did I not know you better, my dear, I should be vastly inclined to accuse you of mendicity.”

“Well to be sure, Mrs. Susan! I must say, my dear, you are monstrous perlitte.”

This was said in a lively manner by another female, at least ten years the junior of her companion, with equally languishing blue eyes, equally rouged cheeks, a more delicate mouth and nose, and altogether a

more delicate person. Her dress was considerably more coquettish, while quite as smart as that of her senior. In fact, if Mrs. Susan was to be classed as *Housekeeper grandiflora*, Mrs. Jenny deserved the title of *Lady's-maid splendens*.

“ Mr. Fibbs can believe it or not, just as he likes; it's quite hoptional,” she added, looking at the travelled valet with a glance intended to carry conviction with it.

“ Now, ladies,” exclaimed that very agreeable personage, as he sat between them, stirring his tea-cup, and looking quite as much at home as though every thing in that very comfortable housekeeper's room was his exclusive property, “ *mia bella signora, mia carissima signorina*, as we said in Italy,—I hope, I trust, you will moderate that vivacity that renders you both so inexpressibly agreeable.”

Mrs. Susan bridled a little. Something had been said by the incautious Mrs. Jenny that offended her; but the compliment of the accomplished valet fell like oil upon the

raging waves. As she drank her tea, however, she should have liked the compliment better had it not included her bosom friend; and she entered into a resolution not to invite her to her evening assemblies, if she did not behave herself better; for she was beginning to think, that "the young woman must be taught to keep her distance." No lady's maid, according to her mode of etiquette, ought to be suffered to take liberties with a housekeeper; but this Mrs. Jenny had not only done: she had committed a more unpardonable act in making too free with the housekeeper's most particular friend.

If Mrs. Susan began to consider Mrs. Jenny "a forward minx," the latter returned the compliment by setting the housekeeper down, in her mind, as "a good-for-nothing old hussy. At her time of life to be ogling the men in the ridiculous way she did! She never in her born days had seen anything so howdacious!"

That was the Lady's maid's secret opinion

of her superior. The fact is, Mrs. Susan gave treats, or *ridottos*, as she styled them; and Mrs. Susan was supposed to have a good deal more at her disposal, even, than the abundance of good things that the Duke of Newcastle might innocently have supposed were his own; and this occasioned many individuals of the other sex, the coquettish Lady's-maid desired to be *her* most particular friends, to appear at the said treats in that position to her senior.

"By the way, that just reminds me of an adventure I met with, of a very singular character, when at Florence," observed the travelled valet, as the still-room maid, who was waiting-maid in the housekeeper's room, handed him some cake with his tea.

"An adventure!" exclaimed the Lady's maid, in her most effective manner. "Well, I do doat upon adventures, to be sure; I shall listen to it with prodigious pleasure."

"*Prodigious*, my dear," observed the housekeeper to her bosom friend, with an intense satisfaction at being able to shew

Mr. Fibbs how deplorably ignorant her bosom friend was; "I am monstrous afraid, child, you are not so familiar with your entomology as you ought to be. But that's of course no reflection on you, my dear; none in the least. It's the bounden duty of parents and guardians—if one *has* parents and guardians, and isn't an unnatural child, which I thanks my stars *I* never was—to take care that one expresses oneself properly when one goes into company, and pronounces words as they is written, and never utters any improper aspirations."

"Exactly so, my dear Mrs. Susan," replied the Lady's maid, a little nettled at this powerful attack upon her, and unhand-some allusion to her private history, before a person she was so extremely desirous to captivate; "there is nothing that betrays so much hignorance; except when persons, my dearest Mrs. Susan, makes use of a lot of fine words, Mrs. Susan, which they knows no more the meaning of than the babe unborn: and makes themselves monstrous ridi-

culous into the bargain. Hignorance is one thing, my dearest Mrs. Susan, but in my mind haffectation 's a great deal worser."

"The Marchesa Bumblebeedizzi was the beauty of all Florence," commenced Mr. Fibbs, anxious to prevent the storm he saw brewing in the rather murky horizon of the housekeeper's countenance. His object was gained: both his companions appeared desirous to forget their feud, in the curiosity they felt to hear what was forthcoming about the exalted lady their most particular friend had just mentioned.

"Every one was in raptures with the Marchesa," continued the narrator; "the ladies envied her her superior charms—the gentlemen were dying to throw themselves at her feet, and avow themselves the slaves of her *beaux yeux*, as we say in France. I arrived in Florence on the very day three duels were fought by different noblemen, who were rivals for her affections. The whole city was in confusion—the Prince Beccafigo was despaired of—Count Ortolan

was a corpse—and the Grand Duke Rustifusti had got a bad thrust in his left arm.”

“My goodness!” exclaimed Mrs. Susan, looking extremely concerned, “those nasty swords! I wish gentlemen never wore ’em. If they fall out, nothing satisfies them but becoming suicides of their fellow-creatures.”

“Well, for my part, I think a sword mighty becoming,” observed the Lady’s maid, determined to show her independence. Mrs. Susan said nothing—she looked at her bosom friend, not swords, but daggers.

“I retired to my chamber the evening of my arrival, rather tired after my long journey,” resumed the valet. “*Amor vincit omnia!* as we said at Eton, was my exclamation, when I perceived on my dressing-table a little scented billet addressed in a delicate running hand ‘à l’Eccellenzo Signor Fibbs.’ As there could be no doubt the letter was intended for me, I made no scruple of breaking the seal, which I observed was a couple of doves billing and cooing within a wreath of roses.”

“How per— how *prodigious* sentimental!” cried the lady’s maid, correcting her mispronunciation very emphatically.

“My astonishment may be imagined when I read the following sentences,” continued the favourite of the housekeeper’s room, with an air as if the extraordinary adventure he was relating, he could regard only as one of very ordinary occurrence.

“‘I have seen thee: henceforth thou art my fate. I love thee; but *how* I love thee, vain is language to express. I sigh for thee—let me not die for thee. If thou hast a heart susceptible to woman’s tenderest influence, come to the Palazzo Bumblebeedizzi, at the hour of twelve, on the terrace steps nearest the orange-grove. Remember, and be secret.

‘ Until death, thine adoring

‘ MARCHESA.’ ”

“Well to be sure!” cried the housekeeper, in undisguised indignation, “I protest I never heard talk of anything so igno-

minious; Markesa though she was called, I 'd lay any wager she was no better than she should be—in short, a regular Jezebel.”

“Now, my dear Mrs. Susan, you must remember foreign customs are not our customs,” remarked the gentleman, gravely.

“Thanks to goodness—and I hopes the people as looks after our customs, if they catches any body bringing over any you 've been speaking of, will treat them as countryband as possible.”

“No doubt they will,” replied he, and then quietly resumed his story. “When I had read this epistle, I recalled to mind what I had heard respecting the desperate state of Prince Beccafigo, the unhappy end of Count Ortolan, and the severe wound of the Grand Duke Rustifusti, and prudence bade me stay: but *Audi alteram partem*, as we said at Cambridge. On the other hand, then, I recollected the moving descriptions I had read of this ravishing beauty—this pride of Florence—this wonder of Italy: and all the gallantry within me was up in arms to fulfil

the too flattering wishes of the divine, the incomparable Marchesa."

"I had a better opinion of you, Mr. Fibbs," said the Housekeeper, with some dignity, and a blush which seemed to be scorching the patches on her rouged cheeks. It was now the Lady's-maid's turn to be shocked. She, however, satisfied her conscience by looking intensely modest at the bowl of her spoon.

"I arrived," continued the travelled valet, as though quite indifferent to the unfavourable impression he was creating, "at the hour of twelve, at the Palazzo Bumblebeedizzi; and on the stairs of the terrace, near the orange-grove, I had the felicity of beholding the divine Marchesa. *Veni, vidi, vici*, as we said at Eton."

Mrs. Susan held up her head very high, clasped her hands before her ample breast, and cast her eyes sternly in the direction of the ceiling. Mrs. Jenny stared into her teacup, and apparently found there some unusual attraction.

“We rushed into each other’s arms.”

At this announcement Mrs. Susan drew her chair back several inches, and Mrs. Jenny thought she ought to faint.

“We were locked in an embrace so rapturous as could be enjoyed only *à discretion*, as we said in France, by happy lovers meeting clandestinely at midnight, under an Italian sky, upon an Italian terrace.”

The discreet housekeeper drew her chair sharply several inches further back, and gave a glance at the offender, which partook much more of the quality of her pickling than of her preserving stores. The lady’s-maid, who would not for the world have seemed less virtuous than her superior, placed her cup and saucer down, and scientifically arranged herself for a little hysterics. In the next moment their curiosity got the better of their indignation; and they listened, though with a decided impression that their most particular friend ought to have been more particular by a great deal.

“We were enjoying an Elysium—our souls too full for utterance—our hearts throbbing together in mutual ecstasy, when I heard a noise to my right. I quickly turned round, and beheld a man of lofty stature and the most gloomy visage I ever beheld, wrapped in a large cloak, advancing towards me with rapid strides, with a naked poignard uplifted in his hand. ‘Traitor!’ he shrieked, in accents of mingled rage and jealousy, ‘thine hour is come—receive thy doom!’ At the sound of his voice, the beautiful Marchesa, in an agony of terror exclaimed—‘My husband!’—and rushed like lightning up the stairs of the terrace.”

“Then the good-for-nothing wretch was a married woman!” cried the horror-struck Mrs. Susan, lifting up her hands and eyes in pious amazement. Mrs. Jenny determined not to faint; but she in a very proper manner turned her back on the speaker.

“Yes; the gentleman was no other than the Marquis Bumblebeedizzi,” answered their companion: “hearing that his wife had

made an assignation, he lay in ambush to make a victim of her lover. *Exempli gratia*, as we said at Cambridge. Fortunately, at the very moment of his approach, my attention was directed by a noise to my left. I beheld another man approaching with a drawn sword. He, according to report, was one of the favoured lovers of the divine Marchesa, and had left his bed at that untimely hour to gain one more smile from his adored mistress. I drew back instantaneously, as I beheld myself menaced with immediate death from a desperate enemy on each side of me.

“You will be shocked to hear the catastrophe,” added the gentleman, very much at his ease, finishing the contents of his teacup. “Indeed, I think it is too terrible to listen to: too frightful to repeat.”

In a moment the two females were as close to him as they could conveniently get, pressing to hear the conclusion of the adventure; for, now there could be nothing wrong in the story, they were very well

satisfied there could be nothing wrong in their listening to it.

“Judge, ladies, of my horror,” resumed the narrator, after withstanding their united entreaties for several minutes, “at beholding, the moment I fell back from my advancing enemies, the Marquis Bumblebeedizzi weltering in the blood of the poor Grand Duke Rustifusti, and the Grand Duke Rustifusti weltering in the blood of the poor Marquis Bumblebeedizzi! One had been run through the body, the other stabbed to the heart. *O tempora, O mores!* as we said at Eton.”

While this confidential conversation had been going on at the tea-table, the other guests of Mrs. Susan were amusing themselves according to their several inclinations. A party, consisting of the Chamberlain, the Butler, the Steward, and the Groom of the Chambers, were assembled round a card table, playing at ombre, and seemed very happy in their amusement. In contrast to them appeared two other guests of Mrs.

Susan, who sat in a corner by themselves, to all appearance out of conceit of every thing in the world, except a plate of buttered muffins, which was constantly handed to them, and its contents eagerly devoured.

“Curse me if I can stand this sort of thing any longer!” exclaimed one in a determined tone. “I’m sure he’s a low fellow, or he wouldn’t behave so shabbily. Don’t you think so, Duke?”

“Of coorth I do, Marquith!” replied the other of the reader’s two old acquaintances in livery, as he expeditiously disposed of a very buttery mouthful.

“I don’t know what’s come of Mrs. Jenny,” resumed the other, in the same dissatisfied tone, “I used to consider her a girl possessed of a mighty pretty taste and judgment. Then I was everything to her. Even our butler remarked how monstrous civil to me she was. But now, may I perish, if she takes any more notice of my presence, while this fellow is in her company, than if I were a beggarly shoe-black.

I would call her to an account for this, was I not certain sure the change in her was all owing to this inveigling, circumventing, palavering, foreigneering coxcomb, whom I have a prodigious inclination to affront before her face. A capital idea, eh, Duke?"

"Ekthellent idea, Marquith," replied the other. "By the bye, I think itth monthtrouth dithgratheful of Mithtreth Thuthan behaving to him ath the doth. Monthtrouth dithgratheful, Marquith."

"Well, I 'll tell you what I will do, Duke."

"Yeth, Marquith."

"I won't stand it, that's flat."

"And *I* won't thtand it, Marquith, and tho ith *that* flat!"

"I'm deucedly inclined to pick a quarrel with that everlasting rascal. I would fight the fellow for half-a-farthing. Shall I go up and pull his nose, or throw him out of the window? Eh, Duke?"

"Don't be rath, Marquith. Remember the ladith. Pray don't alarm Mithtreth Thuthan."

“D— Mrs. Susan. It’s that aggravating little gypsey, Mrs. Jenny, I’m thinking of. I thought she had more sense than to waste her time upon the valet of a Baronet’s younger son, when she can have a Marquis’s own State Footman. It’s a degradation, Duke, which no State Footman of spirit ought to put up with.”

“Of coorth it ith, Marquith.”

“It’s decidedly an insult, Duke.”

“Dethidedly an inthult, Marquith.”

“We must show him that we are not to be trifled with, Duke.”

“Motht thertainly we mutht, Marquith.”

“Wait till we’ve finished the muffins, Duke, and then we’ll soon let the fellow know who’s who, here.”

The greasy edibles now rapidly disappeared down the throats of the agitated friends, as they occasionally sent scowling glances in the direction of the trio at the tea-table, who were evidently extremely sociable—at least, the two ladies had quite forgotten their most particular friend’s

little peccadillo with the great Italian lady.

By them the threatening looks of the Damon and Pythias in livery did not pass unobserved. Perhaps, of the three, the travelled valet enjoyed them the most. He entertained a very small opinion of his once especial friends, Messieurs. Duke and Marquis, and continued to practice on the credulity, and feed the vanity of their mistresses, quite as much to annoy them as to amuse himself. How completely he succeeded will presently be shewn.

Mrs. Susan might have entertained some misgivings that she was acting wisely, in neglecting her old flame in her endeavour to secure a new one—but Mrs. Jenny was younger, and more careless of her conquests; the idea that she was making one of her swains intolerably jealous, she regarded only as a gratifying tribute to her charms.

There was another circumstance that contributed as much as anything to the disagreeable feelings her tall friends in the

corner were forced to endure. The Lady's Maid was "not a going to see that hodious old woman" succeed in her designs upon so agreeable a young man as Mr. Fibbs; and the Housekeeper was quite as determined "that impudent little minx" shouldn't have him, if she tried ever so.

The tea-things had been removed—the little still-room maid had gone to join the cook's evening assembly in the kitchen—the card players were so taken up by their own loud jokes, and louder mirth, as to be completely unmindful of what was going on around them. Mrs. Susan, with a plate of cake, and Mrs. Jenny, with another of oranges cut in quarters, were rivalling each other in their entreaties to the lady-killing Mr. Fibbs, who, with a glass of wine to his lips, and a most winning smile on his good-looking countenance, was addressing some very gallant speech to his fair companions, when the two jealous personages, to whose wounded self-love this scene had been gun-powder and aqua-fortis, started up from

their seats, and with flushed faces and determined strides stalked towards the happy trio.

Mr. Fibbs saw them advance; but the movement—the object of which he anticipated—only caused him to increase his apparent ardour in addressing his attentive associates.

“Positively, my dears, you are *molto raviso*, as we said in Italy,” exclaimed the travelled valet. “I cannot tell you how much you remind me, my adored Mrs. Susan, of my exquisite friend Madame la Comtesse Pomme de Terre, with whom I passed so many agreeable days at the delightful Chateau Pomme de Terre, in France; while you, my dear Mrs. Jenny, afford me similar pleasing recollections of the ravishing Baroness Maccaroni, whose splendid mansion, the Villa Maccaroni, at Naples, is so well known to all English travellers, who, like me, have enjoyed the advantages of *le grand tour*, as we say in France.”

The compliment was well taken in both

directions. The virtuous Housekeeper was half afraid at first that the Countess was no better than the Marchesa; but it was clear at least that her most particular friend had very high acquaintances, and she took it as mighty civil of him to compare her with so great a lady as she felt satisfied was the mistress of the Chateau Pomme de Terre. The Lady's-maid seemed even more sensible of so agreeable a comparison, and smiled her sweetest smile in return.

“Do take a bit of cake, Mr. Fibbs, with your glass of Bucephalus. I assure you the Duke told me he had never tasted so agreeable a combustible.”

It is probable his Grace said *comestible*, and the wine was *Bucellas*.

“Now I ’m sure a horange will do you a vast deal of good, Mr. Fibbs,” exclaimed the other, with a manner equally winning.

“You seem quite at home, here, Mr. Thingamy!” suddenly cried the Marquis’s own state footman, very rudely, as he planted himself, with a monstrous fierce air, right in

front of the gallant gay Lothario of the Housekeeper's room.

"Yeth, you theme quite at home, here, thir," echoed his friend at his elbow. The travelled valet unconcernedly looked the first of the two full in the face, and then allowed his eyes to fall gradually down the row of buttons on his waistcoat—then descended his plush breeches with the same quiet scrutiny—and slowly fell down his stockings to his shoe-buckles. He then, as leisurely, gave an ascending scrutiny to his companion; and, when he had reached his face, turned to address the half-alarmed Mrs. Susan, without taking any further notice of her tall Damon, or of his equally tall Pythias.

"I assure you, my charming friend," he observed, "that you are the very image of the most agreeable Frenchwoman I ever met with—the reflection of her very person; *veluti in speculum*, as we said at Eton."

This sort of treatment did not seem to agree with the dignity of a Marquis's own State Footman.

“People must be cursed fools to believe such stuff—eh, Duke?” cried he, as offensively as possible.

“Of coorth they mutht, Marquith,” readily said the other.

“And as for you, my dear,” continued the travelled valet, turning affectionately to Mrs. Jenny, after taking a glance at his wine, as he held it a moment steadily between his eyes and the light, “there cannot be anything more clearly established, than your close resemblance to that extremely fascinating Neapolitan. *Mirabile dictu*, as we said at Cambridge.”

This familiarity with his mistress was the last drop of gall that overflowed his previously brimming cup, and the Marquis’s own State Footman at once lost all command over his temper.

“You ’re a low fellow!” exclaimed he, looking blue, under the combined influence of rage and jealousy. The words had scarcely escaped his lips, when he fell back two or three paces—the natural result of having

unexpectedly received the contents of the wine-glass in his face, that the insulted valet had hurled at him with all his force.

In a moment the whole room was a scene of confusion. The card-players hastily left their chairs with consternation and alarm written most legibly in their well-fed faces. They were just in time to prevent further violence—they were just in time to allay the fright of Mrs. Susan; but they were too late to prevent one catastrophe—Mrs. Jenny would not have lost such an opportunity for one of her mistress's best dresses—she was in a fit.

CHAPTER IV.

BEAU NASH, AND THE PUMP-ROOM AT BATH.

THE pump-room at Bath was, a hundred years ago, the head-quarters of fashionable frivolity. The waters of this gay city of King Bladud were then in the height of their celebrity. Invalids of all descriptions flocked to try their efficacy—much in the way flocks of geese hurry to the fens, to flounder in the waters, gabble, and be plucked. But Bath was a place of fashionable resort; and a considerable portion of its very numerous

visitors made the waters the ostensible object of their residence within its walls.

Persons of all ages and all sexes, or as Lady Wortley Montagu described them—men, women, and Herveys—elbowed each other in the pump-room. The tired-out statesman came for a little relaxation; the comfortable tradesman for a little pleasure; needy bachelors sought wealthy brides, and buxom widows agreeable partners. From morning till night there was a constant round of water-drinking, dancing, masquerades, card-playing, gossip, politics, and methodism;—for let it be borne in mind, that it was a place for saints as well as for sinners; and, whilst the gayer portion of the community ran after assemblies and all such carnal amusements, the more serious moiety hurried as eagerly to hear the energetic expoundings of the favourite thump-cushion of the season.

The pump-room was the general rendezvous and promenade of every body who desired to be thought somebody. Here a crowd of ladies, prominent in their swelling

apparel and powdered head-dresses, minced along on their high-heeled shoes, escorted by a crowd of cavaliers in their full-skirted coats of various colours, with the ordinary accompaniments of sword, ruffles, wig, cocked-hat, capacious vest, well-setting small-clothes, long hose, and buckled shoes.

These two great divisions in the human family seemed subdivided into infinite varieties. In the first, there was the leader of the *beau monde*, who talked loud, appeared to hold every one at her disposal, and cared for nothing but the topic of the hour. Then came the reigning toast—generally a much younger, as well as a much prettier woman—with her circle of admirers, putting forth her most charming affectations, and having quite as high an appreciation of herself as the most devoted of her adorers. Next came the great heiress—plain in person, gorgeous in dress; by far the most arrogant of the three, and imagining all the men who approached her designed to appropriate her snub nose and a hundred thousand pounds.

After these came the old dowager, sworn servant to cards and scandal—followed by the gossip, the matchmaker, and the adventuress, striving hard to make the best of so good a market. Fat parsons' wives, and sporting daughters of fox-hunting squires; aldermen's wealthy widows, ambitious of good society; and antiquated virgins, who *would not* despair;—they formed a few only of those who made up the female company at the pump-room; but each was the type of a pretty considerable class, who claimed no unimportant position in the world around them.

The male portion of the promenaders were at least equally numerous. The old noble, a martyr to gout—the young one, to sharpers; dishonest tradespeople, and roguish servants; the buck—a well-dressed young fellow, with a vast deal of spirit, and a standing army of duns; the military fortune-hunter, whose sole resources for his campaign were six feet of impudence, a brazen physiognomy, and a good suit of clothes; the plethoric divine

and the consumptive man of genius; the fashionable physician, and the equally fashionable pickpocket; purblind admirals, and generals who had not a leg to stand upon; staunch old Jacobites, who could scarcely conceal their contempt for the Hanover succession—and zealous old Whigs, who could hardly be restrained from some practical exhibition of their horror of the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender.

With such strange elements, it might be thought difficult to maintain harmony; but this was left to one man, whose business it was to keep the heterogeneous mixture so nicely amalgamated, that no disturbance could ensue. There were some high spirits among the gentlemen, and some intractable ones among the ladies, but it became necessary to preserve such spirits within due bounds: the impudent would become offensive, and the reckless dangerous, had there not been a controlling power to keep both in check.

It is wonderful what very humble instru-

ments may sometimes be made to answer in great emergencies. The Janizaries used to display their camp-kettle as an unfailing signal for revolt—and the heroes of the French revolution were equally stirred at the sight of a dirty red night-cap. The company at Bath did not set up for their veneration either of these respectable emblems,—though they made choice of one equally empty, in that bowing, scraping, palavering example of the genus *Fiddle-faddle*—a master of the ceremonies.

But the person who held this office at Bath about a hundred years ago, was immensely superior to the degenerate animal of the same species now to be found at our fashionable watering places. All the impudence of all the masters of the ceremonies who have flourished from his time to the present, would not amount to what Beau Nash, as he was styled, possessed of that useful quality. He was the *arbiter elegantiarum* of the pump-room—the autocrat of the ball-room—the Minos of every dispute

—the judge without appeal, in all the most difficult points of precedence, dress, gentility, and fashion : in short, he was absolute sovereign of Bath.

Yet though Beau Nash was enthroned to give the law to rank and fashion, and laid down the unalterable dogmas of birth and breeding, it was very difficult to account for such an elevation in his case, unless it could be referred to some rule of contraries, that would qualify him to understand the claims of blood from having no such claims himself. The qualification lay, perhaps, in its being entirely of the same material as the famous prophetic head, invented by Friar Bacon.

He was little better than a shallow fop ; but by the mere force of his own inexhaustible impudence, he produced such an impression on the visitors of Bath, that he was enabled to stare down the most confident, and humble the most presuming amongst what was called the very best company. Such was Beau Nash ; but whether Bath

called Beau Nash into existence, or Beau Nash made Bath what it was—and both positions have had their advocates—we cannot now stop to inquire.

It was the usual hour for the company to assemble in the pump-room; and as it was the height of the season, that large apartment was filling fast with its usual motley collection. Here and there were several groups, apparently engaged in earnest conversation: they were the different varieties of the class *Gossip*—the political, the fashionable, and the scandalous gossip—the characteristics of which were so strongly marked, there was no mistaking one group for another.

A party of fashionable loungers, male and female, had planted themselves near the door, as though for the purpose of seeing who went in and out; and it was evident, from their loud laughter, that they were amusing themselves with a little ridicule—an amusement still common amongst persons of more wit than manners.

At a little distance from them was another party, apparently composed of country gentlemen, with one or two persons of distinction who had so long refrained from going to court, they could scarcely be distinguished from their rustic neighbours. They were engaged in discussing the news which had lately arrived from the French coast, and it was evidently of more than ordinary interest.

On a bench situated close to the wall, midway between the two groups, there sat a female, so closely muffled up as almost to defy scrutiny; and by her side was a singular-looking old gentleman, who might have passed for her father or guardian.

They seemed very quiet people, unknown to any one, and in all probability had taken the retired place in which they sat, merely to rest themselves after their promenade. They, apparently, found sufficient employment in their own observations, for they had remained for some time without addressing each other.

“If I ’m not mightily mistaken,” observed

an old-fashioned elderly gentleman in a Ramilies wig, belonging to the political group, "the game will soon be played; and then, my friends, we shall see who has got the best hand."

"Yes, my lord," said another of the same party, "and we shall also see who plays his hand the best; for in a game of this nature, skill will sometimes do more than cards."

"Ay, ay, Sir Harry!" cried a third; "but nobody knows what may come of the game till it 's played out. By all account," he added, sinking his voice, "the Prince is in earnest, and if the French court are as much in earnest as he, I don't think the issue very doubtful."

"Who has he got with him at Paris, I wonder?" inquired another.

"Oh! he has several good names," replied the old-fashioned nobleman, "chiefly Irish and Scotch; one, however, is certainly English—my Lord Falkland; and you may be sure, if my Lord Falkland is with him, something is going to be done."

"'Tis high time," said Sir Harry, emphatically.

"Have you seen Walpole?" asked one.

"Yes; he arrived here two days since," was the reply; "he pretends to laugh at the doings at Paris, but I don't doubt at all his taking it mighty serious before long."

"There 's a son of his here too, I am told," said his lordship. "Is he likely to turn out anything? Is he worth looking after, think you?"

"Not at all," answered Sir Harry, "he is said to be more fond of amusing himself with that Jezebel, Lady Archibald Hamilton."

The lady on the bench here made a movement, which caused the speaker hastily to turn round; but seeing only the very quiet pair who occupied the seat, he immediately resumed the conversation.

"I have heard he is mighty fond of affecting the virtuoso," continued he; "there was a report, too, of his having become a bookworm, and was going to enter into a rivalry with the scribblers of Grub Street."

“Did you know that the Crown Prince of Hanover is here?” inquired one, in an under tone.

“I saw him yesterday,” replied the nobleman in the Ramilies wig, “and think he would be a monstrous deal better employed in preparing his family for his approaching change of lodging to his beloved Hanover, when the Prince of Wales sets foot in England, than in flaunting about with that painted hussy, Lady Archibald, or with that empty booby, Bubb Doddington.”

At this moment the knot of Jacobites were disturbed by the approach of a military looking man, in the service of King George, who eyed them in a manner that shewed he entertained no unfounded suspicion they were employed in talking treason.

The attention of the company was directed to the entrance of Prince Frederick with a numerous retinue, to whom a large proportion of the company seemed desirous of shewing all proper respect—the gentlemen bowing, the ladies curtseying, as his Royal

Highness passed through their ranks, graciously recognising their civilities—for he assumed the merit of being a gracious prince. The little knot of Jacobites, however, did not join in these demonstrations. They quietly walked away as he approached—not choosing to pay any court to an individual they could recognise only as the Crown Prince of Hanover.

Many persons of distinction were near his Royal Highness; particularly one well-dressed, well-powdered gentleman, whose manner and bearing would have pointed him out as at least an ambassador from some powerful state, or a potentate of some minor principality, had not his appearance been unmistakeably English. One who was so familiar with the Heir-Apparent, could not be otherwise than a nobleman of the highest rank; but whatever his dignity, it was clear enough he was well-known, for he almost every moment interrupted his discourse with the Prince, with all sorts of free-and-easy addresses to the most distinguished

persons in the throng through which he was passing.

It was either “Duchess, I kiss your hand—My Lord, your most obedient—Captain, your servant—I hope I see your Ladyship well—My Lord Bishop, I trust your gout is not so troublesome—Child, you are looking charmingly to day—Sir Peter, I am glad to see you—Alderman, how ’s your digestion?—Madam, I hope you did not catch cold at the Assembly t’other night—My Lord Duke, this is a pleasure I did not count upon”—and so on, till he had gone through, to all appearance, every title to be found in the pump-room.

It was strange, but not less true, that these recognitions were received by the individuals to whom they were addressed with such satisfaction, as proved that they were quite as well pleased to be so addressed by that great man, whoever he was, as to receive a bow from the Prince beside him, whom he contrived to throw so completely into the shade.

This marvellous great personage, who could attract towards himself a greater degree of notice than the son of his sovereign, was no other than the illustrious Beau Nash. He made himself appear the Cardinal Wolsey of the pump-room; and the *Ego et rex meus*, so characteristic of the lofty churchman, would have been quite as natural in him—for he certainly made his Prince, in that vast assembly at least, secondary to himself.

“Holy Moses! look at Nash!” exclaimed a lady, with a good deal of vivacity, from amongst the group of fashionable gossips. “I vow and protest, a peacock spreading his tail before the sun, and secretly congratulating himself on being in such marvellous fine feather, is a world less glorious than our Master of the Ceremonies.”

“What would Lady Townshend have the poor man be at?” inquired Sir Charles Hanbury Williams; “he is doing the honours of the place to his Royal Highness, with whom any kind of honour is a rarity.”

“Mother, you are only envious you can’t cut such a figure yourself,” observed Charles Townshend.

“Nay, Charles, I’ll be hanged if I haven’t cut many a better out of pasteboard,” the lady replied; “but here’s a bird of another breed—surely ’tis the goose that laid the golden egg!”

The individual thus alluded to by Lady Townshend, was no other than the pompous Duke of Newcastle, who came awkwardly shuffling into the room, fully impressed with the belief that he was the greatest statesman in the world, and the first man of quality in the kingdom.

“Does any one know what has become of Horace Walpole?” asked George Selwyn, as if he had just roused himself from a six-weeks’ nap. “I asked Lady Archibald what she had done with him, but she gave me to believe that she *hadn’t done* with him.”

“I’m thinking there she let you know the truth, for once,” observed Lady Townshend, archly; “to be sure, she is not much addicted

to honesty; but even the greatest rogues have their moments of conscientiousness. Faith, now, it 's mighty strange that the young Walpole should be so good an imitator of the old one: one does everything he can for the King—the other seems intent on being no less useful to the Prince.”

The young female on the bench appeared to be getting restless. Possibly she did not relish this fashionable gossip, and the scandal she was obliged to hear unpleasantly interrupted her thoughts. It was in her power to put an end to the annoyance—but still she lingered. Her equally silent companion seemed to be directing his attention to the conversation of the other group, and did not notice the lady's impatience, or hear what had fallen from the people whose vicinity had proved so disagreeable to her.

“ Well, all I know is, she 's sure to take care of him,” added Selwyn, in his usual torpid manner. “ Egad, it looks as though Horace's good fortune was a Lady Bountiful, who made her gifts a deuced deal more useful

than palatable ; her wine is always antimonial, and her cakes cathartic : she very sensibly endeavours to touch the heart by moving the bowels. Lady Archie's love for a young fellow, if it isn't physic to him, strike me dumb if I know what it is."

"He's certainly monstrous lucky, if that's the case," said young Townshend, joining in the general laugh ; "and as for the lady, all I can say of her is, she isn't likely to throw her physic to the dogs."

"Ah, Charley, how can you say that, when you know it's all given to the puppies of her acquaintance !" replied Lady Townshend, in the same humour.

The young lady on the bench rose as if to move away ; but whether it was from indecision, or the influx of fresh company into the room, she almost immediately sat down again.

Sir Robert Walpole now entered, with two or three staunch political friends. He was evidently in high spirits—his jovial face beaming with health and good nature, and

his laugh ringing with cheerfulness. And yet he was on the brink of a precipice—he had a thousand causes of care and apprehension: the country was threatened with an invasion—the people were on the eve of rebellion—his enemies were increasing in audacity as well as in number—and his friends becoming treacherous.

Bubb Doddington followed at a little distance. It might easily be seen, from this political weathercock, in which quarter the wind was blowing. He seemed to have his promised peerage always in his thoughts—indeed, he carried this self-conceit as palpably in his face as if it supported a coronet. He saw the Minister close to him; but, instead of advancing to pay his respects with the eagerness he would gladly have shewn a year or two back, he crossed the pump-room to where he beheld a genius of his own stamp, in the awkward, shuffling, pompous Duke of Newcastle.

Presently Horace Walpole, and his cousin Colonel Conway, entered. The former was

looking pale and anxious: close study and long vigils were doing their work upon a constitution previously inclined to be delicate. The young soldier looked handsomer than ever; his campaign had done him no more harm than his promotion. Something said by one to the other set them both laughing as they were approaching their friends.

It was observed that the lady on the bench started when her gaze fell upon the younger Walpole, and a slight trembling seized her as she heard his name uttered by some of the group who had just before coupled it with so much scandal. The two young men were hailed by them so cordially, that the attention of her companion was directed towards them.

“Zounds, Horace!” exclaimed Selwyn, turning up his sleepy eyes, “you look as lively as an undertaker during an epidemic.”

“Yes, that is it exactly,” added Lady Townshend, laughingly, “our friend’s gaiety is rather solemn, I must say; it is for all the world like that of a man who has just

buried a monstrous troublesome wife; only restrained by a sense of decorum from jumping out of his skin."

"Shouldn't wonder if that 's his case," remarked Selwyn, suppressing a yawn; and then added, as though making an effort to keep awake, "I say, Horace, have you lost your own wife, or somebody's else's?"

"As our friend is not a Benedict," said Colonel Conway, laughingly, "if he *has* lost a wife, it can be no concern of his; he cannot much lament her, knowing how often she must have gone astray previously."

"That 's customary," said his cousin, joining in the joke, "but at least I have the consolation of knowing, that my loss is another man's profit."

"Well, I 'm sorry for Lord Archie," observed Charles Townshend, with well-affected condolence, "but if his Lordship has become a widower, the stroke of death must have been felt in many quarters besides the domestic hearth."

"If you allude to Lady Archibald Ha-

milton," observed Horace Walpole, "I am happy to inform you that I parted with her last night at her own Assembly, in the best health and spirits; and had the pleasure of escorting her this morning to a China auction, where she is now giving the auctioneer the best evidence of her being in the land of the living."

"Come, Father! we will leave this place," said the lady on the bench, rising, evidently in a state of considerable agitation, to depart.

"I think it would be better," replied her companion, gravely; and presently they both quitted the pump-room.

Little did the Minister's younger son know the mischief he had done by the thoughtless admission he had just made. Little did he guess that the heart he cared for more than he could have done for a thousand Lady Archibalds, had been throbbing within a few feet of his own. Most impatiently the proud spirit of Lord Falkland's daughter had heard the scandalous imputations on her lover: but when his own

lips confirmed them, as far as an acknowledgment of intimacy with a woman of bad character could do, she felt the damning evidence too strong for her to attempt to combat, and left him, almost with as much contempt as pity.

Horace Walpole could know nothing—could guess nothing, of what had occurred; being ignorant even that the young lady was in England. He only knew that, hopeless as his passion seemed, he loved Arabella Falkland with a power that would have wrestled with death for the mastery.

CHAPTER V.

THE CRISIS.

“EVERY body ’s in Bath, your Honour,” observed the travelled valet to his master, as he was superintending his breakfast. The young gentleman sighed: there was a person, he felt convinced, did not make one of the company; and he would gladly have dispensed with the best half of it, to have secured her society with the remainder. At that very moment she was in the next street.

“Every body ’s in Bath, your Honour,” re-

peated Mr. Fibbs; "never knew the place so full; one can hardly get along for the chairs that throng the streets. *Per fas et nefas*, as we said at Eton."

"Did Colonel Conway get my note, Fibbs?" inquired the Minister's son, listlessly.

"Yes, your Honour," he answered, "the Colonel said he should not fail to be with you at the time you appointed. He was so good as to enter into conversation with me, respecting old times and scenes at Eton and Cambridge; and he had many a hearty laugh at our boyish adventures and escapes. Boat races on the Thames—cricket matches in the playing-fields—pretty girls at the miller's, and tucks-out at 'The Christopher:' all were recollected by the Colonel, your Honour; I never knew a pleasanter gentleman—especially when he presented me with a crown; and when I replied, *finis coronat opus*, as we said at Cambridge, he laughed at my Latin, and flung me a guinea."

His master smiled; but as he did not

receive any encouragement to proceed, Mr. Fibbs thought proper to cease his communications. The truth is, our hero was in no humour for them. Ever alive to the interests of his father, the rumours that he had lately heard respecting the formidable coalition that the restless spirit of Bolingbroke had once more succeeded in organizing for the overthrow of his schoolfellow, filled him with uneasiness.

At present there was no more communion of sentiment between the Minister and his son, than there was when the latter had returned from his travels. This, with his peculiar sensitiveness, the latter attributed to his being so insignificant a member of the family as a younger son; and the impression threatened to embitter his whole existence. It rendered him moody and dissatisfied; he fancied that the mark of Cain was on his brow—that he was a Pariah in the division of castes—that the bend sinister was indelibly fixed in his heraldry—in short, that his having elder brothers put

him out of the pale of his father's affections.

But these fancies attended him only in his despairing moods: occasionally he had others of a totally different aspect. We have already said that he was engaged in literary composition. He was bringing his work to a close; and neither painter nor sculptor, rapt in admiration of some masterpiece of art of his own creation, could have looked upon a production of his genius with a satisfaction more intense, than this performance was regarded by its author—not from confidence in its merit, but from the pleasurable visions it never failed to place before his mind.

The publication of his work was a medium through which he beheld all sorts of pleasing objects; but the two prominent ones were, his becoming an object of pride and pleasure to his distinguished parent, and his exciting sensations of a similarly agreeable and ennobling character in a quarter which, though to him as remote as

if it were another sphere, brought images of beauty and affection as freshly on his mind, as though they were reflections of things existing before his eyes.

It appeared as if these impressions were to set in motion the most powerful energies he possessed; that his soul—as in the fabulous account of Mahomet's coffin, ever hanging between heaven and earth—was to be suspended by some such agency between physical and filial love. It was possible that these energies might become antagonistic—then the struggle of the spirit would be great indeed. This struggle was nearer than he anticipated: it was coming upon him—it menaced him from a distance, like the cloud “no bigger than a man's hand,” that is the harbinger of whirlwinds, tempests, and tornadoes.

The cousins were sitting together over a manuscript—one was reading and the other listening, apparently with equal pleasure—when Fibbs entered with a billet, which he gave his master with a peculiarly significant smile.

“A *billet doux*, Sir, as we say in France,” whispered he, “brought by Mistress Jenny, my Lady Hamilton’s own maid.”

Colonel Conway left his seat and strode to the window, where he was soon very busily engaged in making his observations on the passers by. His kinsman took that opportunity of looking over his note. It was from Lady Archibald, in the usual language of ladies of gallantry, making an assignation at her own house, which was in one of the most fashionable streets in the gay city of Bath.

Horace Walpole’s first impulse was to crush it in his hand; but he remembered what had been told him respecting the secret intrigues against his father, which were carried on under her roof; and the idea that had already been more than once presented to him, of making the Lady subservient to his own political views, again suggested itself. He resolved to go. Fibbs was soon in possession of the necessary reply, which, there is no doubt, a gentleman of his tra-

velled experience delivered to the fair messenger with all the ceremonies sanctioned by the gallantry of the Servants' Hall.

"Horace, my boy," cried the Colonel for the third or fourth time, "there's the handsomest face and the finest figure, gone by just now, I have seen in the whole course of my existence. I called to you several times, but I might as well have called to a post. By Jove, you have lost a most ravishing sight! I wonder whether that old fellow with her is her father, her uncle, or her guardian. Strange looking hunks! Shouldn't have taken him to be any relation. No more like her, than a Dutch cheese is like a mermaid. Hope she's going to stay some time in Bath. I'm hugely impatient to see her again."

"Why, how you rave, Harry!" exclaimed his kinsman, joining him at the window. "I had no notion a pretty face could touch you so nearly."

"Touch me, Horace!" replied he, "I tell you what, my fine fellow, if you had seen

her, maugre your passion for your Roman innamorata you are so deuced close about, you would have been all over Bath after her by this time, and boring me to death about her perfections."

Horace Walpole laughed. He knew himself better. He, however, could not have entertained the most remote idea of who the wonderful beauty was. He felt convinced there was but one woman in the world who could have justified his cousin's observation, and he would as soon have expected to meet the Pretender at Bath, as Arabella Falkland. Yet Arabella Falkland was in Bath, as we have said, and she it was who had just passed the window.

"As respects this father of yours," observed Colonel Conway, as they both returned to their seats, "I don't think the case is so bad as you put it. You ought to know pretty well, by this time, that I have a way with me of always looking at the bright side of things; and dark as you have made out your picture, my dear Horace, you

may depend on 't, it may be made to look a wonderful deal brighter, when placed in a proper light."

"What proper light can there be, Harry?" said the other, gloomily. "I am an alien from my father's heart and hearth—I am considered worthy of no more notice than that decent degree of respect that ought to be afforded to a distant connection of the family—in short, I am a younger son."

"As the man said of his blind horse, that is more your misfortune than your fault, Horace. You are a younger son, it is true; but for your consolation, and to shew you the bright side I like to look upon, I assure you that is an evil which is always lessening. You are now a younger son, but you know, my dear Horace, every year you are getting an older son."

"You are as bad as Charley Townshend or George Selwyn, Harry. Some people, when asked for bread, give a stone: you are quite as tantalizing, for when I ask for consolation you offer a jest."

“Nothing can be more proper, be assured. Laugh at your troubles, my dear fellow. They are a kind of duns, that have never confidence to look you in the face, if you treat them in the spirit they deserve. But, joking apart, I think this Castle of Otranto of yours is more substantial than the *châteaux en Espagne* you are so fond of raising.”

“You think my father will be pleased with it?”

“I don’t know that. Sir Robert Walpole, I fancy, is not particularly partial to the *Belles Lettres*. There is, however, a vast deal of difference between a book produced by a stranger, who may take himself to the devil whenever he likes, for all we care—and one that proceeds either from oneself, one’s nearest relation, or dearest friend. I doubt if Sir Robert could be brought to trouble himself about the Castle of Otranto, or any other Castle, the owner of which did not possess influence in one House of Parliament, or votes in the other: but flesh and blood are all-powerful. When the Castle of Otranto

is in everybody's hands, and its praise on everybody's lips—as I hope it will be—and he learns that his own son—a part of himself, as it were—can lay claim to the notice and popularity it enjoys—I verily believe all the father will be so strongly stirred within him, that you will then scarcely escape the fate of that favourite child, who was hugged to death in the arms of its affectionate parent.”

“There's no getting you to be serious for five minutes at a time, Harry. But pray tell me what you think of my father's position.”

“To tell you the truth, Horace, I think he never was so hard pressed. He has powerful enemies; and they hang on his flank and rear, and threaten both his wings, so that he must find no slight difficulty in getting along. The Prince, Bolingbroke, Wyndham, and Pulteney, menace him in different directions; for, however well some of them conceal their movements, it is clear enough to any shrewd observer, they only

wait an opportunity for a combined attack."

"Do you think the result doubtful?"

"I have too much confidence in your father's talents and resources to doubt the issue of a contest. But, my dear Horace, in the best arranged order of battle—in the finest series of manœuvres, accidents will occur, which may mar everything. The probabilities are, that Sir Robert will triumph as he has triumphed before; but when I refer to the state of things on the continent, and the strong Jacobite feeling which is gaining ground in this country, and wears a most menacing aspect in the northern parts of the kingdom, I will not conceal from you, my dear Horace, that there is reason for apprehension."

"What have we most to fear, Harry?"

"It is not easy to point out what is most to be feared. But the threatened invasion from France, or a rebellious rising in England, may throw so many difficulties in the Minister's already well-beset path, that a spirited attack from his enemies might over-

throw him, horse and foot. There is, however, one vast advantage of which they cannot deprive him; this may enable him to hold his ground a long time."

"The King's favour, you mean, Harry?"

"Exactly. The King, I know, is very much attached to him. I know, also, that he cultivates feelings of a very opposite tendency for the Prince, Wyndham, Bolingbroke, and Pulteney. The first he hates—the second he despises—the third he fears—and the fourth he doubts. Neither is likely to do the Minister much harm with the King. The chief danger is in another direction. The arts of his enemies have had a vast influence over public opinion: and unless his friends rally round him, and he displays consummate judgment, public opinion will, in the end, be too strong for both King and Minister."

"I have had that impression some time, Harry. I feel that something must be done to stop the growing mischief. We must write pamphlets—we must publish essays—

we must circulate political squibs. I will throw myself into the thickest of the fight; and if we do not conquer these fellows, Harry—if we are forced to retire, it shall not be my fault if my father cannot say, like Henry IV. after the battle of Pavia—‘ All is lost, except our honour.’ ”

The conversation between the cousins continued a short time longer; but all Colonel Conway’s efforts to find a bright side for his affairs, failed to have any satisfactory effect upon our hero. Apparently the young soldier was one of the innumerable ephemeridæ who live in the sunshine of the gay world. He laughed, he jested, he idled, he trifled his time away, as zealously as the emptiest of his contemporaries. But he was a good deal better than he seemed.

Notwithstanding Henry Conway belonged to the constellation in which George Selwyn and Charley Townshend took their eccentric course, scattering their brilliant scintillations wherever they moved, he had qualities of a much more useful kind.

“I tell you what it is, my boy!” he at last exclaimed, as he laughingly took up his cocked-hat to depart. “Your respected father has destined you to be a statesman; and, like a good boy, a statesman you intend to be: and, by Jove, I think it ’s such a deuced good thing, I shouldn’t wonder at all if, some of these odd days, I exchanged into the same regiment. It strikes me I have a prodigious talent in that way, though nobody ever perceived it; but that of course arises from sheer blindness. You had better, then, make good use of your time, or I shall be a Minister before you.”

Both laughed heartily at the idea; and as they parted, our hero, in the same mood, earnestly begged he might hope for his patronage.

CHAPTER VI.

A REBELLION UNMASKED.

HORACE WALPOLE, at the appointed hour, proceeded to the place of assignation. He was dissatisfied with the step he was taking. The purity and intensity of his attachment to Arabella Falkland, were evinced in his disinclination to commit himself in the manner he was doing with Lady Archibald Hamilton. Her Ladyship had latterly shewn him many marks of her favour, and he could scarcely refrain from exhibiting towards her

the customary gallantries: but, notwithstanding the Lady's preference was far from problematical, he had certainly carried on the intimacy with much less ardour than a man of gallantry was expected to evince in similar circumstances.

At the court of George II. morality could not be expected to be held in much estimation. His Majesty, with that hereditary folly so remarkable in his race, had, in his old age, taken to himself a German mistress—one of a like brood with those wretched harpies who made the reign of his father so contemptible. Her name was Wallmoden, but she had been ennobled with the title of Countess of Yarmouth. The example of his father was followed by his son—with this difference, that the Prince's taste was rather English than Hanoverian.

As it was well known that both the King and the Heir-Apparent kept mistresses, such high examples were not without due influence on the Court. Every great man found it necessary to have such an individual

on his establishment. In wealthy noblemen's books of accounts, her salary found its place with that of the chaplain and apothecary, and other ordinary expenses. But the evil did not rest here. The general disrespect of the marriage vow caused a general laxity of morals—there was as little sense of propriety amongst ladies of quality, as principle amongst men of fashion. Intrigue appeared to form a part of the regular daily routine of both sexes, to such an extent, that noblemen mixing in the gay world, much beyond the age that should have exempted them from such follies, thought it not beneath them to be reputed as licentious as their sons and grandsons.

This was the penalty we paid for accepting a foreign Prince for our ruler, who was tainted with the worst vices of the continent; and it was not till this royal exotic had been thoroughly naturalized, after displaying its vices through three generations, that the nation could boast of an example of respectability filling the highest place in the State,

in the person of its pure-minded and honest-hearted Sovereign, George III.

The fulfilment of the assignation which Horace Walpole had suffered himself to enter into with the mistress of the Prince of Wales, would have been thought in those vicious days quite a venial error: yet he could only reconcile himself to it by a good deal of sophistical justification, in which his devotion to his father was more apparent than his sense of right. One thing at least was clear—if Lady Archibald fancied she had a lover in the son of the Minister, she was mistaken: he did not care a straw for her.

A hundred years ago the streets of Bath were very ill lighted, and far from being very well paved. At night, here and there, at the houses of people of fashion, an oil lamp shed its feeble rays through the thick darkness. When the owners sought their homes, it was usually in a sedan, attended by torch-bearers, who, on lighting the gentleman to his door, extinguished their links in

a sort of inverted iron funnel, to be found still retaining its time-honoured place on each side the doorway of houses of the last century.

Of course there was no seeing the number of the door, or otherwise making out the proper house after dark, without the assistance of the link-boy. This useful personage made a moderate income by attending gentlefolks who remained at places of entertainment late at night, and had to return any distance to their own homes. Nor was it quite safe to venture through the gloomy streets without such attendants, as foot-pads often concealed themselves at corners, or under doorways, to rush upon the unwary passenger.

Horace Walpole, however, required secrecy, and dispensed with a link. He had visited the house often before, therefore had the less necessity for a guide; and as for danger, he had taken care to come provided to meet any one or more of such gentry as were likely to molest him.

It happened to be not only a very dark, but a very disagreeable night, and the thoroughfare seemed almost entirely deserted. Nevertheless he reached the street in which the lady lived, without meeting with the slightest adventure. The house was sought and gained with the same ease. As he came up to the door, he leaned against it, waiting for the signal which he was to answer before he was admitted. To his surprise he found it move on its hinges. Imagining that something had caused a change in the lady's plans, he without hesitation quietly pushed open the door, closed it in the way he found it, and then, though the passage was quite dark, he resolved to find his way to Lady Archibald's *boudoir*, with the position of which he was well acquainted.

He gained the stair-case—he passed the first flight—he entered the drawing-room—there were wax lights burning on a table; but without paying any particular attention to the objects around him, he proceeded hastily in the direction of the ante-room. He

was stopped by coming against a recess masked by curtains. This surprised him: but he was infinitely more surprised on making the discovery, which he immediately did, that he was not in Lady Hamilton's drawing-room. This he at once ascertained by the different manner in which the apartment he was in was furnished—and also by the different form of the rooms.

For a gentleman to find himself towards midnight an intruder in a strange house, was not very agreeable; and to be discovered lurking in one of its chambers at that untimely hour, was something so derogatory that it was to be avoided at any risk. He would have retraced his steps with very little loss of time, but he heard footsteps ascending the stairs he had mounted, accompanied by the voices of one or more persons speaking in subdued tones. Involuntarily he glided behind the curtains, with the fervent hope that these most unwelcome people would merely pass through the room, and leave the coast clear for his escape.

He heard several persons enter, and his mortification may be imagined when he heard them all seat themselves. He felt his position getting worse and worse—indeed it was far from enviable. He was likely to be prevented from fulfilling his engagement, which in all probability would incense Lady Archibald. Every moment he ran the risk of being detected in his hiding-place. He could not at all reconcile himself to the idea of the son of Sir Robert Walpole being caught like a burglar, hid in a recess of a house into which he had never previously ventured; then he cursed his folly for having by a mistake led him into so critical a position. But he saw his execrations were of no use. All that his error now allowed him to do, was to retrieve it. His only hope of escape lay in keeping himself quiet, and taking advantage of the first opportunity that should present itself of getting out of the room unobserved.

He listened attentively, and could so distinctly hear the voices of different persons who shortly commenced a conversation, that

not a word escaped him. His astonishment may be imagined when he heard sentiments of the most treasonable character expressed, and designs in favour of the Pretender discussed, which convinced him that he had undesignedly become an auditor of the proceedings of a secret conclave of furious Jacobites.

This made his case a thousand times worse than it was before. Were his hiding-place discovered, his fate, he knew, would soon be decided. No man was more hated by the adherents of the exiled family than Sir Robert Walpole; and if they caught a son of so formidable an enemy playing the part of a spy, he could not expect any mercy at their hands. He might certainly have attempted to give an alarm; but at that late hour, unaware of how many might be concealed in the house, he was perfectly certain that the slightest attempt of the kind would insure his destruction.

There was another most important consideration: as certain plains were being

detailed, it became more and more evident to him that it was of the utmost consequence to his father he should be made acquainted with the whole, with the least possible loss of time. He felt the conviction, that whether he liked it or not, a spy he was forced to be; and he hardly dared draw his breath, so painfully conscious was he of the very critical position in which he had placed himself.

There were several persons; and as more than one was addressed by some title of distinction, he had no doubt some of the most distinguished of the Jacobites had assembled at Bath for the purpose of discussing the state of affairs, and taking such measures as might be most advisable in the present juncture. He heard one person addressed by a form employed only towards Roman-Catholic priests; and he felt assured from what transpired, that the holy father was an agent of the Pretender, sent to communicate his intentions to his adherents in Great Britain.

The nature of the anticipated assistance from France was duly entered upon, and the

involuntary spy was made acquainted with the vast promises of assistance to the Young Pretender which the Minister of King Louis had thought proper to make. Then came the names of noblemen and gentlemen in England, Wales and Scotland, who were to be relied upon, and the extent of the assistance each was expected to afford. The Minister's son was thunderstruck on hearing persons mentioned as most active in the cause of the Stuarts, whose zeal for the family of Brunswick hitherto no one had been so hardy as to doubt; others were named, whose fidelity was thought to have been secured by the clemency shewn towards them for their participation in the rebellion of 1715.

Our hero's excitement was becoming every minute more intense, when he heard a voice the tones of which thrilled through every nerve. At first he fancied it must be a delusion. It was a thing utterly incredible—improbable—impossible. Still he heard those melodious accents—he had never heard any-

thing to resemble them before—it was a voice that he ought to be familiar with.

His feelings were getting too powerful to be controlled. In an agony of fear, doubt, and wonder, he gently drew back sufficient of the curtain to allow him a glance at what was going forward.

His worst apprehensions were realised. Round a table he saw seated, with various papers before them, a number of noblemen and gentlemen, some of whom he recognised. At one end of the table sat, in a clerical garb, the priest he had heard so often addressed by his associates; at the other end, pale, and with a singularly painful expression in her fine features, sat Arabella Falkland.

Horace Walpole, as he remarked the worldly intriguing faces of such of the conspirators as were advanced in life, and compared them with the clear, fair, youthful countenance of his idolized mistress—the latter seemed to him like an angel of light among spirits of darkness. What a contrast was there in that bright lofty brow, and some of the

dark care-worn, hard-featured physiognomies around her! He could not however account for the peculiarly painful expression of her features: lighted as they were by enthusiasm, there was still a feeling as of pride struggling with despair, apparent in her countenance, that gave it an expression altogether foreign to its ordinary one.

Was it that she believed herself embarked in a cause that could not succeed? or that she dreaded the bloodshed and misery the struggle must occasion, and, with true womanly sympathy, felt reluctant to have anything to do with so hazardous a business? It never for a moment entered his mind that *he* could be the cause of her evident suffering; that she was engaged in a desperate conflict to conquer her feelings in his favour, since she had ascertained, as she believed, how unworthy he was of her attachment.

He could scarcely avoid testifying his admiration, on hearing the lucid and eloquent statements of the Pretender's affairs, she laid before the assembled Jacobites. She

detailed the negotiations of the French court with King James (the Old Pretender) at Rome, explained the designs of Cardinal Fleury to replace the Stuart dynasty on the British throne, in conjunction with the Scottish Jacobites who had entered into an association to assist the exiles in the approaching struggle. The journey to Paris by Prince Charles was then described, and his exertions in France to advance his royal father's interest. And lastly she entered into the detail of the military and naval assistance Louis XV. proposed to afford his unfortunate kinsman, of which a military force, ten thousand strong, under the direction of that eminent commander Marshal Saxe, were to land in England, simultaneously with the debarkation of another French force in Scotland.

“Gentlemen!” added the fair conspirator to her attentive auditors, “this is an affair of the most vital importance. There never was a cause which appealed more strongly to those sentiments of justice which pervade every honourable mind. It is the cause of

an amiable prince, who, without having committed any fault, is deprived of his birthright; and, in his proper position, beholds a foreigner who seems placed there only to disgrace it."

"I've seen two of these Hanoverian cattle, and I trust I may never live to see a third," cried a stern old Jacobite.

"These princes of Brunswick may be good enough in their own country, though I am told they are scarcely sufficiently creditable, even for Germany," continued Arabella Falkland; "but the people of England ought not to be satisfied with the indifferent ruler of a foreign state, when the legitimate descendants of their own distinguished race of princes are in existence. We have been too patient under the insult. We have submitted much too quietly to our degradation. The Stuarts, for whom we shed so much invaluable blood in the time of the great struggle, we have allowed to be driven out of the country, and then surrendered ourselves tamely to the rule of an alien and an usurper.

“ But the time has come when longer submission to this degradation is impossible,” she added: “ as I have already explained to you, the powerful King of France has interested himself greatly in behalf of our young Prince; and, with his Majesty’s assistance, he will shortly be at the head of such a force as must render the recovery of his kingdom not only possible, but certain. But it is absolutely necessary that all who are true to the family, from whom many of you have derived your honours, and in a great measure your wealth, should be ready to join with heart and hand in the plan for a simultaneous rising.”

The conspirators listened with a good deal of attention to the fair orator. To such attention they knew her to be well entitled, as the daughter of the Pretender’s trusty counsellor, Lord Falkland; but whether it was because they feared the existing Government, or experienced a lively remembrance of the ill result of the rebellion in 1715, they did not enter into the arrangements for tak-

ing up a hostile attitude; they were evidently in no hurry for committing themselves irretrievably.

“You see, the devil of it is, my dear Miss Falkland,” said one, “that confounded fellow, Walpole, is so sharp-witted, he is sure to find us out directly we begin to move.”

“Ah! he ’s a shrewd fellow,” observed another, “and I am told his son Horace is like to prove as deep as his father.”

“Tush, my Lords!” exclaimed Arabella Falkland, impatiently, “What have we to fear from these Walpoles? The father is a time-server, who I think might easily be bought off, if we thought him worth the buying; and as for his son”—here her voice expressed a degree of bitterness it is impossible to describe—“no matter,” she added, hurriedly—“he is not worthy our notice.”

These bitter words Horace Walpole heard in as much amazement as indignation. It seemed incredible that she should speak of

him so disparagingly—she, who had once regarded him with sentiments of the warmest, of the deepest attachment—who had more than once expressed her conviction of his honour, and her admiration of his worth.

What a change, he felt, must have taken place in the few short months since they had met! How completely must her political predilections have perverted those feelings in his favour, to which he had so often looked back with the same freshness of enjoyment they had originally created!

The painful sensations which this speech created, did not prevent his observing the extreme danger of her position. He felt she must be saved at any hazard. He perceived that the only way of insuring her safety was to disconnect her from the band of reckless Jacobites with whom, so unaccountably, she had got entangled.

But how was this to be done? he asked himself. At present he was a prisoner. In a short time it was not improbable his father, from some of his numerous sources

of information, would learn the fact of this treasonable meeting, and the dangerous part which the daughter of Lord Falkland had thought proper to play in it. It could not be long after the receipt of this information, before she would find herself experiencing the discomforts of a narrow lodging in the Tower.

Considerable time had now elapsed, and one or two of the least active spirits amongst the conspirators, overcome either with their late vigils, or with the wearying recital of the different plans and statements that had been laid before them, had, without any ceremony, folded their arms upon the table, laid their heads thereon, and resigned themselves without any further struggle to the somnolency that had overpowered them.

The thought entered the mind of our hero, to endeavour to make his escape from the room unobserved. He noticed that the faces of the sleepers would be towards him; and that their less fatigued companions appeared so absorbed in their treasonable

debates, that it was not difficult to glide, from the recess in which he was, to the door, without attracting their observation.

Still it was a movement attended with imminent hazard. The slightest noise on his part, or change of position on theirs, would betray him to their observation; and then he was well aware his fate was sealed. Nevertheless, in the hope of being able to rescue the woman he had so devotedly loved, he determined to run the risk.

The candles burnt dimly—the sleepers were in a heavy slumber—and those who were most awake riveted their attention on the fair being whose eloquence had already so greatly stirred their hearts. Horace Walpole glided noiselessly from his concealment. He felt his heart beat with unusual violence, but beyond that, he was sensible of no excitement. He had resolved to dare everything, and was in the mood to abide the issue.

Arabella Falkland had been contrasting the princes of the House of Stuart with

those of the House of Hanover—she had deeply excited the sympathies of her hearers, by relating the sufferings, the indignities, and the humiliations of the royal exiles; and then created in their hearts quite as powerful an indignation, by reminding them of the unamiable traits and disagreeable characteristics of their more fortunate rivals. She had worked herself into a state of unusual excitement, and her words were becoming every moment more dangerous.

She next urged them to strike a blow for their true prince, which should be as much to their honour as to his advantage: telling them they had nothing to fear from any of the agents of the usurper—least of all from their vindictive enemies the Walpoles, whom they would find no difficulty in crushing whenever either of them fell into their power.

At that moment, whilst speaking under the influence of outraged feelings, she raised her head, and her gaze suddenly encountered that of the individual she was so bitterly stigmatizing.

There are occasions when the feelings of a long life are concentrated in a single moment, and Nature speaks out in spite of all petty obstructions. Although Arabella Falkland had that instant been speaking so contemptuously of her lover, her first impression was the danger of his position—her first wish, to insure his safety.

She thought not, conspirator though she was, of the cause she had been so ably advocating—of the lives and fortunes of her associates, put in peril by the intelligence of their plans he was carrying away. She thought only that the slightest hesitation or faltering in her speech might excite attention towards him; and with a heart almost suffocated by the overwhelming pressure of its womanly emotions, by making a supernatural effort she proceeded with her discourse, apparently without a thought beyond it.

At every word she uttered, her ear was following him—in an agony of apprehension—step by step: her sense of hearing at once became wonderfully acute—she knew he was

opening the door, though not the slightest sound was audible—she traced him down stairs with the same marvellous inspiration. But nature had been taxed too much—she faltered in her speech, her cheek became deadly pale, and as her lover quitted the house, she fell to the floor in a swoon.

CHAPTER VII.

KILLING NO MURDER.

IN what a state was Horace Walpole when he reached his own lodgings! Poor Fibbs stared at him in utter amazement. He had never before beheld him under such extraordinary excitement. Sleepy as the tired valet was, his master's pallid countenance, his flashing eyes, his broken exclamations, his restless uneasy movements, not only made him thoroughly awake, but made him feel an anxiety for his health which no previous occasion had called forth.

Fibbs was possessed of a good deal of natural shrewdness. He saw at a glance that something had occurred of an unusual nature. He was perfectly well aware of the assignation with Lady Archibald Hamilton, through the medium of his coquettish acquaintance, her Ladyship's woman: and there could be no doubt in his own mind, of his young master having been in some very unpleasant manner disturbed while engaged with the lady.

From such premises he drew his own conclusions, with the kind of logic of which he had contrived to pick up a smattering at Cambridge, combined with that he had learned in the more practical school, the Servants' Hall. It was evident there had been a duel; and, as it was quite clear his master had not been killed, it was equally evident his antagonist had.

But then came the question, Who was the antagonist? It might have been the lady's husband. The travelled valet, however, was perfectly certain, that killing a lady's

husband was such an every-day occurrence in gallantry, that it was not of sufficient importance to account for the extremely excited state in which he found his master. He had done something of a vast deal more consequence, there could not be a doubt. No young man of family and fortune would come home with such a blanched cheek, and in such an unaccountable humour, after committing such a mere bagatelle.

There was but one cause that could produce such effects. Of course a valet of Mr. Fibbs's sagacity was well acquainted with the position in which Lady Archibald stood with the Prince of Wales. He was as satisfied as he was of his own existence, that it was the Prince who had disturbed their *tête-à-tête*—and *ergo*, he added, it was quite plain his master had killed his Royal Highness.

Having come to that conclusion, everything appeared rational and proper. To run an Heir Apparent through the body, Mr. Fibbs acknowledged to himself, was rather a serious business, and he wondered no longer at the

very serious manner in which a son of the King's Minister regarded it. He, however, took very little time to consider what he should do. He resolved to stand by his master, though he had killed fifty princes; and serious business though it were, he could not help regarding it as considerably increasing his consequence. He argued very logically, that it was not every valet who had a master who would venture to kill a King's son.

Nothing was further from the troubled thoughts of the Minister's son at that moment, than either Lady Archibald or Prince Frederick—indeed he had quite as completely forgotten them, as if they had never existed. His mind was a perfect chaos. All was confusion, dismay, and bewilderment. He thought over the adventure in which he had been engaged; and the more he thought of it, the more troubled became his ideas.

Then came the most marvellous part of this strange business. If her heart had been so completely hostile as was apparent from

her discourse, when she recognised him in the room standing within a few yards of her—as he was confident she did recognise him—why was it that she assisted so materially in his escape? A word—a look—a start from her, and in a few seconds he would have been a corpse at her feet.

He paced his chamber with uneasy strides. He was restless, feverish, and wretched, to a degree he had never before experienced. The separation from her had been a dreadful necessity, but that did not lower him in her estimation. To hear her speak of him with contempt, he had not been prepared; and he could not satisfy himself there was either necessity or justice in it.

Throughout all this feeling for himself, his troubled mind was haunted by an impression of her danger, and the necessity there was for his taking prompt measures for putting her on her guard, or detaching her from her reckless associates; but he asked himself the question—What could he do? At that hour all interference was out of

the question—and at a time more seasonable the difficulty still presented itself, of not knowing whether she would submit to such interference—with that of not being able to do anything against her companions, without running the risk of compromising her. In every way the affair was extremely perplexing.

In these uneasy reflections time passed on. He had never attempted to go to bed—nor, still more singular, had his valet given him the slightest intimation that he was expected to do so. In short, he had been left completely to himself. At last he seemed suddenly awakened to a consciousness that pacing up and down a room was not the best way of meeting the difficulty in which he found himself.

He looked for the trusty Fibbs. Great was his astonishment to find him apparently straining every nerve to pack up all the things he had brought to Bath, with as much celerity as silence. He stared with wonder: and well he might. Fibbs was absorbed in

his occupation—he seemed to feel that unusual responsibility rested on his shoulders, and that he would shew himself equal to the emergency. If the fate of a nation had depended on his quickness in packing, he could not have exhibited greater despatch.

“Fibbs!” he cried, after observing him some time in silence.

“Yes, your Honour,” replied the other; and then with a face full of mystery, not unmingled with a due share of importance, he left his work, and approached his master, in the fullest conviction that the latter had at last determined to communicate to him his misadventure.

“I shall soon have everything ready, your Honour,” observed he, in a whisper intended to be extremely confidential; “and in matters of this kind, your Honour may believe me, it is of the first importance to have a good start, when we are reduced to such a *dernier ressort*, as we said in France.”

“What in the world are you thinking about?” cried his young master, in fast-

increasing amazement, as he more closely regarded his servant's proceedings.

"Be under no alarm," whispered the travelled valet; "accidents, you know, will happen, in the best regulated families; but at any rate we are not going to run away for a trifle. *Respice finem*, your Honour, as we said at Eton."

"*We!* who told you we were going to run away at all, Sirrah?"

"Oh, not exactly *run* away. We are merely going to retire—an honourable retreat, your Honour—nothing more. *Dum vivimus vivamus*, as we said at Cambridge."

"Zounds, fellow, what d' ye mean? If you choose to retire, retire and welcome—you may make your retreat as soon as you like, and as honourably as you can. But *I* am neither going to retire nor retreat, I promise you; so just be so good as to let my things remain where they are."

"Not going, your Honour!" exclaimed Mr. Fibbs, in unaffected amazement. "*Cede magnis*, as we said at Eton. But, beg pardon,

your Honour—may I ask,—are you aware of the consequences you incur by remaining?”

The Minister's son opened his eyes to their fullest extent at this query. He was not prepared for an answer, simply because he was puzzled to account for such a question. His first thought was, that his servant had been making too merry amongst his friends below stairs; but a scrutinizing glance assured him the young man was perfectly sober. His next thought was, that his intellects had become affected; but another penetrating glance assured him that he was as sane as himself.

“In the name of heaven!” he impatiently cried, at last, “what is the meaning of this nonsense? What consequences have I to fear?”

“Perhaps, after all, the Prince is only wounded, your Honour,” observed Mr. Fibbs, “that is quite *une autre affaire*, as we said in France. Still, allow me to say, your Honour, inflicting a wound on the Heir Apparent, I am afraid, is regarded in the light of an offence,

the penalty of which is rather heavy, and cannot be escaped. *Judex damnatur cùm nocens absolvitur*, as we said at Cambridge."

Horace Walpole began to have a glimpse at the idea so mysteriously presented to him. At any other time he would have laughed heartily at such a misconception; but his mind was heavy—he had too many and too serious troubles, to allow his indulging in mirth. He, however, quickly undeceived his companion; and vast was the disappointment of Mr. Fibbs, at discovering that his master had not fought with Prince Frederick—no, had not even committed so trifling an offence as killing the husband of the lady he had been to visit.

It is impossible to say how far this surprise might have gone to disgust the travelled valet with serving a gentleman of gallantry, who fought neither the husbands of the ladies with whom he had assignations, nor their princely protectors,—had not our hero very judiciously made him acquainted with so much of what had occurred as was necessary

to secure his services. Fibbs listened with great interest; and when he became aware that the adventure in which his young master had been engaged was a very unusual one, and learned that the heroine of it was the noble beauty at Rome, of whom he had so often thought since the, to him, unaccountable termination of that intimacy, he seemed in some measure to grow reconciled to his disappointment; and was quite as eager to go in search of Miss Falkland, as soon as he could commence his inquiries, as he had been to hurry his departure from Bath, directly he became satisfied his master had ventured to run a King's son through the body.

After arranging with his valet what was to be done, and giving directions to be called early, our hero sought his bed for a few hours' repose. His sleep was troubled and broken—full of confused images and unnatural combinations—now affecting the life of Arabella Falkland, and now that of his father; and then, in some unaccountable way, involving both.

Almost immediately on his waking in the morning, the following letter was placed in his hands :

“ I write to you under the impression that, although you are so far lost to all sense of honour as to play the spy, you may be accessible to arguments that should prevent you from playing the informer. The lives of many honourable gentlemen are in your hands; and, when I allowed you to escape what they would have deemed the just reward of your treachery, I felt an assurance that you would, under such circumstances, refrain from betraying them.

“ I trust I have not been deceived in this, as completely as I have been in my estimate of your character. The esteem I had for you could never have suffered diminution, had I not ascertained that you were the paramour of Lady Archibald Hamilton. The degradation I felt in hearing this publicly stated, became a thousand-fold more humiliating when I heard you make such an acknowledgment of your intimacy with that

bad woman, as corroborated the confident statements of your friends.

“ Adieu, Sir. Perhaps I was wrong in placing so much confidence in a Walpole; but it is a wrong of which I have since deeply repented. Before you receive this, I shall have left Bath—but not without insuring the safety of those high-minded friends in whose company you found me.

“ Thank heaven there is no probability of our meeting again! If that misfortune should occur, be assured that the daughter of Lord Falkland will know how to treat the man who has dishonoured her preference.”

The murder was out. Horace Walpole saw that he had been ruined in the opinion of the proud and pure-minded Arabella Falkland by the slanderous gossip of some empty-headed fools of fashion. He recalled the words he had uttered respecting his acquaintance with Lady Archibald, and wished his babbling tongue unending punishment.

He was not the man to sit down tamely to digest such a letter as that he had just read. He was soon actively engaged in pursuing inquiries after the writer. He could not rest a moment without making every possible effort to undeceive her. His pride might be wounded by this summary way of dealing with him; he had been too hastily condemned—too sharply dealt with: but he felt that wounded pride should not prevent him from endeavouring to justify himself to such a woman as Arabella Falkland.

His own exertions were unremitting; and he was well seconded by his active emissary, who seemed quite in his element in a business requiring so much delicacy and tact: but though he succeeded in finding the house in which he had met with the adventure of the preceding night, which he ascertained to be the next to the one he had intended to enter, he could learn no intelligence whatever of the lady of whom he was in search. Her companions, as he had been informed, had left Bath—most probably in consequence of some

alarming intimation from her—but to her movements there was not the slightest clue; and at last both master and man were obliged to abandon the inquiry in despair.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRINCE OF WALES'S PARTY.

AMONG the company at Bath, we have already mentioned his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales; but with the Prince at this eventful period there happened to be an unusual number of his Royal Highness's political partizans. It was singular that the very place appointed for a rendezvous of the Jacobites, should have been selected for a rendezvous of the Tories; yet so it was, and, to make the matter more strange, at the

identical time chosen by the partizans of the Pretender for discussing their plans for driving the King out of his dominions, my Lord Bolingbroke had selected for calling a meeting of the opponents of the King's government, for the purpose of getting rid of the King's Minister.

The Philosopher of Battersea had left the cultivation of his paternal fields, to devote his noble mind to the more congenial pursuit of political intrigue; and never did the genius of discord appear to smile more kindly upon his labours, than when he joined the congress of discontented spirits he had collected together at this fashionable Spa, for the grand object of ruining his hated school-fellow.

They had assembled by agreement on the evening following that which had been so eventful to our hero, in one of the drawing-rooms of the house that had been taken by Lady Archibald Hamilton. It was prettily fitted up—though not in style equal to any modern-furnished house of the best description, now standing in that gay city of nasty

potations. There was a due allowance of chairs and tables, heavy draperies at the windows, and ugly carpets on the floors, a chimney glass in a clumsy gilt frame, with projecting branches which held wax candles, and a few uncouth ornaments in Chelsea china on the shelf that supported it. There was also among the features of the room, a china closet, with a glass door half covered with a curtain, which prevented the spectator from observing that one of the small panes had been taken out.

We must not wait to describe more particularly the furniture of this apartment: sufficient has been said to convey an idea of the scene. We must now say something of the actors in it. We begin with the person of greatest consequence—or rather of greatest rank. It was a remarkable coincidence, that Prince Frederick was scarcely ever seen in an evening at any house where he might consider himself at home, without a pack of cards in his hand. This was the case at the present moment; and although he was so en-

gaged in conversation, as to render any regular game impossible, he shewed how wedded he was to his favourite source of amusement, by filling up the pauses of the conversation, taking advantage of every momentary break, by cutting for the highest card against Lady Archibald, Bubb Doddington, or any of his Royal Highness's especial favourites, who chose to risk a certain stake; and it was evident by the animation that lit up his rather inanimate royal countenance, that he felt a vast deal more interest in thus testing his luck, than in the important affairs that were being debated by the clever or ambitious politicians around him.

Prominent amongst these, stood the handsome and clever Bolingbroke. His Lordship appeared to have become quite as much a courtier as he had previously been a philosopher. He looked as obsequious as the supple aspirant for a peerage, who stood at his elbow; and the shadow that had often made his noble physiognomy so gloomy, was rapidly disappearing before the smiles of

complacency and anticipated triumph, which now made his aspect so expressive.

To observe his Lordship elucidating in that courtly atmosphere his ideas of government, propounding axioms of political wisdom, and giving forth apophthegms of transcendental statesmanship, whilst engaged in a sentimental flirtation with Lady Archibald Hamilton on one side of him, and an occasional experiment on the chances of the cards with the Prince of Wales on the other, was enough to cause the spectator to inquire what extraordinary change had come over the dream of the noble philosopher, and where had flown all those disgusts of the world, all those determinations for a life of solitude and abstraction, which he had thrice at least so loudly avowed.

There was an individual close to his Lordship, to whom he paid as much court as he did either to the Prince or the Prince's Mistress. If we had not been in the secret of the visit of that philosophic statesman we have just been noticing, at the *levée* of his

Grace of Newcastle, we might have experienced a great deal of astonishment at beholding the Duke, whose *vis-à-vis* in his cabinet declared his Grace so completely the servant of the King, leagued with the leaders of the Opposition in an attempt to remove the King's favourite Minister. But in the hands of such a man as Bolingbroke, the empty, pompous Duke of Newcastle proved a most ready tool; for his Grace was a man possessed of that looseness of principle and shallowness of understanding, which so deep and able a schemer as St. John was sure of turning to his advantage.

There his Grace stood, his face full of that inexpressive gravity which it invariably wore on occasions of more than ordinary importance. He had entertained some intention of embarking in the same boat with a set of men to whom he had long been opposed; and only the prospect this afforded him of getting rid of the man he had the presumption to consider his inferior, and elevating himself to the lofty pedestal he would leave

vacant, could reconcile him to such coadjutors.

By the side of his Grace, the patriotic Pulteney took his share in the political debate that was going forward, in a manner not quite satisfied with the subordinate part it seemed expected he should play. Possibly he thought Bolingbroke was making himself a little too prominent. Pulteney had been too active as a political leader opposed to Sir Robert Walpole, to rest content with an inferior position; and, patriot as he pretended to be, he had his ambition to gratify by the downfall of the obnoxious Minister, quite as much as either of the noblemen just named.

The next one in the privileged group we feel bound to notice, is Sir William Wyndham,—perhaps the wisest and best man amongst them. His hostility to Sir Robert Walpole must have been great indeed, if it made him blind to the unworthiness of the tools with which he found himself obliged to work, in his efforts to remove him from the

government. But in politics, it is not as in other things: an honourable mind once plunged in the waters of faction, becomes invulnerable to all honourable feelings—even in the heel. A sense of shame, a susceptibility to natural impressions, cannot be expected under such circumstances, even in a Wyndham; or he would never be seen stooping to alliances, and countenancing sentiments and conduct, which under other circumstances he could not avoid considering disgraceful.' This insensibility is a barbarous characteristic. It appears as though Politics stalked along like the savage with his club; and stunned its victim, with a view to render him at first a more easy prisoner, and then a more tranquil drudge.

There were a few others belonging to the same confederacy, in the apartment—influential members of the Lower House, and some few individuals belonging to the House of Peers. Conspicuous among the former, was a young man whose features did not exactly satisfy the idea of manly beauty, neverthe-

less they bore a singular expression of intelligence: the teeming brow neutralized the vulgar nose—the brilliant eyes made amends for the inexpressive mouth. This was a young member of great promise, then but little known in society, but who, a few years subsequently, filled the civilized world with his fame—he was William Pitt, the first Earl of Chatham.

By him was another celebrated legislator—a name which carried a vast deal of weight with it, in the same manner as such light things as balloons require a great deal of ballast, to enable them to gain a proper elevation by disposing of it. This was Henry Pelham, the brother of the Duke of Newcastle, a man adjudged to possess some attainments—they might be thought considerable, when compared with those of his brother. There was something resembling cleverness about him, but it was estimated at a very extravagant rate, simply because it came from the Pelhams. To find a crab bearing golden pippins, was not thought

more extraordinary, than to discover a brother of his shuffling, scrambling Grace of Newcastle a person of respectable—of even ordinary attainments.

Like Bolingbroke, Henry Pelham cared only for the people with whom he was connecting himself, as long as they could be stepping-stones to his ambition: he used them to carry him on in his career; he cared not if any sudden flood swept them away as soon as he had passed. He, however, let it be at once admitted, possessed little of that pompous self-sufficiency that made his brother so ridiculous—he was merely ambitious to rise, and make the most of his family interests, to secure such elevation as would content him.

It was obvious from the tenor of the conversation that was going on with the Prince's card-cutting accompaniment, that certain measures had been resolved upon relating to the obnoxious Minister. They were about to attack him boldly in the House of Commons; and on reviewing their forces, they

felt themselves in a condition to do so with the most sanguine anticipations of success.

Bolingbroke, in his most seductive manner, enumerated the votes they had secured. His exposition proved, that many who had been wavering had seceded to the party of the Heir Apparent—while many who had long favoured the Minister had now abandoned him, to make friends of persons they fondly imagined more inclined to favour their particular interests.

The names of Sandys, Wortley Montagu, Lord Limerick, Bootle, Fazakerly, and a great many more, amongst whom were various distinguished members of the Upper House, were confidently spoken of as individuals whose co-operation had been secured. In short it was very plain, according to his Lordship's plausible statements, that the days of the Minister were numbered.

Mixed with the confident assertions and grandiloquent expressions which were escaping from the well satisfied plotters, there was no slight amount of personal animosity.

But in this, it was curious to notice, the Pelhams did not share.

It would not have suited them, just then, openly to take part against Sir Robert Walpole. It was the object of the more clear-sighted younger brother, to learn the designs of the Minister's enemies, that they might be able to take advantage of them whenever they chose: they held too great a stake to risk it rashly—the Duke being a Member of the Cabinet, and his brother Paymaster of the Forces.

“Walpole will be driven to his wits' end,” said Lord Bolingbroke; “and yet I fancy he will do anything rather than resign the supremacy he has held for so long a time. Power, if it be hard to gain, is equally hard to part with. In my Lady Hamilton's case, now,” added his Lordship, very gallantly turning to his fair companion, “it would be a monstrous difficulty—not to say a word of its monstrous hardship—to part her Ladyship from the influence that naturally belongs to her attractions. Beauty and merit are as

inseparable from her, as the power she exercises over our hearts."

"A thousand thanks, my Lord!" replied Lady Archibald, laughingly. "It is mighty civil of you to say this, and of course affords me wondrous satisfaction: but the most satisfactory part of it, after all, I'm thinking, is the knowledge your Lordship has been so good as to afford me of the duration of my charms."

"Why, yes—that cannot help being pleasing, Archy," said the Prince to her. "I should think my Lord Hamilton must like such an idea mightily. Cut, Bubby! Knave to my ace! Ace, of course, counts for highest. Mine, Bubby!"

"But surely your Royal Highness cannot have forgotten," interposed Bubb Doddington, "the assertion made by your Royal Highness scarcely a minute since, that the ace only counted for one in cutting."

"Nonsense, Bubby!" replied the Prince, sharply, "the ace is the highest card of its suit, of course."

The aspirant for a peerage knew better than to contradict the Heir Apparent; yet he was but too well aware that, only a few minutes before, he had lost a tolerable sum, by the Prince insisting that the ace, in cutting, never numbered more than one.

“This measure will quite confound Walpole,” said Pulteney, in a confident tone. “We shall come upon him so by surprise, and so overwhelming will be our attack, that it is scarcely possible he should escape. It will be some satisfaction to know that our patriotic exertions have at last been attended with success. We have done much to rescue the country from the desperate state of bondage under which it has groaned for the score of years this reckless and unprincipled man has had influence in the King’s councils, and it will be among the greatest of human gratifications to remember what staunch patriots we have been.”

“Faith, Pulteney, we have all been staunch patriots,” observed the Prince, “and a mighty good thing it is to be a patriot.

Cut, Bubby—Ace to my King! Mine again, Bubby!”

“Your Royal Highness forgets what you just now stated,” exclaimed his amazed companion, as he noticed the Prince sweep up the stakes. “I thought your Royal Highness just now declared the ace to be the highest of the suit?”

“Don’t be a fool, now, Bubby,” replied Prince Frederick, coolly; “Of course the ace counts but for one, as having but one pip on the card.”

The peer-expectant looked rather blank at this announcement. It was tolerably provoking that the value of the card should shift so—should be of no value whilst in his hands, and beat everything when in the hands of his opponent; but he felt it was not for an apothecary’s son to argue with a king’s heir; and taking such a freedom might damage his hopes of nobility. He thought it best to submit to so one-sided an arrangement; yet his remembrance of the very many trials of the kind he had under-

gone, gave him the idea that he was likely to buy his barony at a ducal price.

“I often reflect on the vast advantages that are in the hands of the statesman,” said Lord Bolingbroke, in his oracular way; “no man can possess more responsibility—no man can effect more harm or good. He is among men, as is the diamond among jewels—the more gloomy his position, the more he is made to shine in it. Even Lady Archibald, brilliant as she is, would be obliged to give way to the great statesman; she only takes our hearts, but he runs away with our understandings; and, when he possesses sufficient audacity to direct his power, he controls our bodies.”

“Your Lordship’s compliments are worthy of your Lordship’s reputation,” said Lady Archibald; “Gallantry mingles so prettily with your politics, as to render the combination a mighty elegant material to be applied to ordinary social purposes. Your Lordship should have lived under the reign of a Queen—when you would have been sure at

least of the royal ear. If Maria Theresa would have you, there would be no fear of your statesmanship being sufficiently appreciated."

Bolingbroke gallantly replied with a comparison between the Empress of Austria and the lady who had just addressed him—of course very much in favour of her ladyship—and in this he contrived to bring in an equally ingenious compliment to the Prince Lady Archibald had subjugated. This led to his Royal Highness taking off his attention from his important employment with Bubb Doddington, to make a proper acknowledgment of his Lordship's flattery.

The speech was not more felicitous than were his Royal Highness's observations in general; and, agreeable as must have been the cause of it, the pleasure it afforded was not powerful enough to detain him a minute beyond the time absolutely necessary to express his ideas, from the princely occupation to which he gave so much of his time.

Poor Bubb Doddington had substantial

reasons for hoping that the interruption was a lasting one. It was inexplicable to him, that whenever he had the honour of playing with the Heir Apparent at any game of chance, he should have to pay for it so dearly. To play at cards with a prince, he was quite conscious, was, for him, a very rare distinction indeed: but to find it invariably lead to an empty purse, was, to say the least of it, a little unsatisfactory.

Such were his reflections; but the “Now, Bubby!” from his illustrious opponent, soon dispersed them. He resumed the interesting amusement with the readiness of a courtier and the patience of a martyr; and took it quite as a matter of course when he discovered he had cut the lowest card in the pack.

The politicians were not long in “harking back” to the subject that engrossed their thoughts, and a vast deal of abuse of Walpole came out, with the whole detail of their plan of attack. Some of them chose to laugh a good deal at the cleverness with which they

had contrived to keep their object in assembling at Bath a secret from the Minister. They were all quite sure he had not the most remote idea that anything more than usual was in progress. They were confident he believed himself as secure in his position, as the earth in its place, and did not so much as dream of being disturbed. Indeed, one or two who were on intimate terms with him professed to know, that the state of his health, which had induced him to seek the Bath waters, was so critical, as to have made it necessary he should refrain from business of any kind.

The Duke of Newcastle and his brother did not, it is true, join in any of these animadversions upon their distinguished coadjutor. The former, perhaps, was a degree more owl-like in the gravity of his physiognomy than at any other period of the debate; but it was well understood, that whatever their opinions on the subject were, they were present as the Prince's friends, rather than his partizans.

Lady Archibald, also, was less severe than her guests. Perhaps she was too much engaged, either in attending on the Prince, or to the covert gallantry of Lord Bolingbroke, to join in the discussion respecting the transgressions of the obnoxious Minister. But though she said little about him, she seemed extremely anxious to elicit the opinions of every one around her, and induced, with the exception of the Pelhams, the most reserved of the company to declare their hostility.

In this way she contrived, as if for the Prince's exclusive satisfaction, to make Pulteney and Bolingbroke, as well as the less influential of his Royal Highness's friends, say a great deal more than they might have thought was absolutely necessary; so that when the party broke up, nothing had been left unsaid that was essential to a complete knowledge of this secret plot against the Minister, in all its ramifications.

The Prince's Mistress had heard the door close upon the last of her guests, when she

hastened with a quick step, and a face radiant with smiles, to the china-closet. She threw open the door with a sharp, merry laugh, that appeared to find an immediate echo from within the closet. The next moment, the figure of a man appeared before her. It was Sir Robert Walpole.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO.

LADY FURBELOW was one of those curious specimens of female humanity, that puzzle the best skilled in classification. As Falstaff said of Mistress Quickly, she was "neither fish, nor flesh, nor good red-herring." She was neither one thing nor the other, but a kind of jumble of all.

She was generally considered to be as obstinate a Jacobite as other members of her family, most of whom had found it neces-

sary to leave the country; and one, Lord Falkland, was known to be in the service of the Pretender; yet she prided herself on always being able to secure one member, at least, of the House of Hanover, to grace her assemblies.

She professed to be a zealous Tory, yet Sir Robert Walpole was one of her most intimate friends; she warmly espoused the cause of Prince Frederick in his quarrel with his father, yet never failed to present herself at St. James's on state occasions, and associate with those whom his Royal Highness regarded with the bitterest animosity; she affected a vast contempt for the frivolities of fashion, yet was no lady in the land more eager in obtaining her pleasure from such sources.

Lady Furbelow was, in short, a perpetual contradiction—apparently stern and selfish, yet often doing the kindest actions—sharp and abrupt in her speech, yet continually betraying extreme considerateness for the claims of others—very often seeming ab-

sorbed in the most worthless pursuits, yet ever having some great object in view. It will not be thought very surprising, therefore, that she continued to be as much misunderstood, misjudged, and misquoted, as ever was any poor lady in this land.

Nevertheless, it was extraordinary to notice how generally her company was sought. Persons of all shades of political opinion met at her house, as at a kind of neutral ground, where they knew themselves to be perfectly safe. There might be seen, almost side by side, the furious Jacobite, the reckless Tory, the patriotic Whig—High Churchmen and Low Churchmen—Catholic Priests and Methodist converts—the unpopular minister beside the pamphleteer who had so lavishly abused him—and the author of the last volume of poems, in close contact with the writer of its bitterest review.

In short, Lady Furbelow's parties formed a sort of social punch, where the extreme sweetness of one set of people neutralized

the acidity of another, and the weakness of some qualified the excessive spirit of the rest—the combination of such opposite qualities forming a result of a very agreeable description.

No person was more talked of than Lady Furbelow. There was scarcely a thing she did, or a thing she said, that was not sure of being discussed all over what was designated as “the town,” for the next four-and-twenty hours after it had transpired. We believe this was because her doings and sayings were always said and done in a manner so very different from those of other people. She was pronounced “an original;” and all her eccentricities obtained as much attention, as though they were the distinguishing traits of an animal of an entirely new species. People thronged to her door in their carriages and chairs, whenever she threw her house open for their accommodation, till the street was blocked up with their several equipages.

One evening, soon after the fashionable

world had taken its annual migration from Bath to Town, there seemed to be a greater mob of vehicles proceeding towards Lady Furbelow's door than had been seen in the memory of the oldest link-boy. Indeed, there was as much noise and confusion going on, as distinguished the most crowded state entertainment at the palace. Gentlemen swore, ladies screamed, watchmen bawled, constables shouted—coachmen and chairmen, footmen and link-boys, addressed one another in their most emphatic rhetoric, as the gaily dressed company were seen rapidly obscuring the stream of light, at the open door of the well lit-up mansion.

There must have been an immense increase in Lady Furbelow's unpopularity, to have occasioned such an immense increase in the attraction of her Ladyship's entertainments. Had she done something very shocking to the King? had she sent an invitation to the Pretender? or was the Pope staying at her house on a visit? It was evident something unusually flagrant had occurred, to have

sent such a flood of fashionable life towards her doors.

For a wonder, Lady Furbelow had not done anything so remarkably extravagant. The King had not been insulted—the Pope was quiet in the Vatican—the Pretender was equally tranquil, counting his beads in the comfortable oratory of his Italian villa. Then she must have got some very remarkable person to show himself at her assemblies—and it was a difficult point to determine whether he was Frederick the Great, Broughton the bruiser, or Maclean the highwayman—heroes her ladyship was equally likely to patronise; or whether he was Sampson Gideon the rich Jew, Duncan Campbell the deaf-and-dumb fortune-teller, or Faux the conjuror—remarkable persons, who, it was believed, had the honour of standing equally high in her estimation.

Those who knew what was the cause of Lady Furbelow's house being so much more crowded than usual, were aware that none of these sources of attraction had collected

her guests. The lion of the evening was neither King nor pugilist, neither highwayman, Jew, astrologer, nor sleight-of-hand man : all which lions her ladyship had produced, till they had ceased to be attractive. The lion she was about to exhibit, was one very much less familiar to her friends. He took the shape of an author of the most interesting work that had issued from the press for a vast number of years. A romance had recently been published, that had taken the whole town by storm. Every one was reading it, or waiting to read it. Those who could not succeed in getting possession of the book, kept talking of it ; and those who were so fortunate as to secure it, talked of it a great deal more.

There were some amongst the crowd who very well remembered the advent of " Sir Charles Grandison "—they doubted that this book, fashionable as it was, had been so well received at first, as had been the new romance. Others again thought of Tom Jones with a like impression ; and some of

the seniors went so far back in their recollections as the publication of "Robinson Crusoe," and were quite as firmly convinced that the new romance was a greater favourite than Crusoe, and his man Friday into the bargain.

Lady Furbelow had stated to her most particular friend, in what is called the strictest confidence, that the author of this monstrous fashionable work would be present at her next assembly; and her most particular friend had of course stated the same interesting intelligence, also in the strictest confidence, to *her* most particular friend. This process of communication had gone on with such rapidity, that in the course of three days the whole town were in possession of the same information; and every one who could lay claim to the acquaintance of Lady Furbelow, had helped to swell the well-dressed mob, who, on this particular evening, filled her rooms to an overflow.

As may readily be imagined from what we have just stated, her ladyship's assemblies were of a singularly mixed character at all

times; but on the present occasion, the miscellaneousness of the company was more obvious than ever it had been. In one place was a group of artists, composed of Roubilliac the sculptor—Hogarth, then in the zenith of his fame as a designer of humorous pictures—and the celebrated painter of Venetian scenes, Canaletti, who had but lately arrived from Italy.

At a little distance was the distinguished astronomer, Bradley, in animated discourse with Nicholas Rowe and Colley Cibber, two of the illustrious obscure among the literary celebrities of the age. In another place might be observed a knot of authors of various degrees of talent; the writer of the last poem—of the last play—of the last sermon—of the last novel, in a very amicable spirit criticizing the work that had brought them together. In one part of the room was Handel, the popular composer, conversing with marked animation with the celebrated opera singer, Signora Frasi, having several admirers of the tuneful art, attentive listeners.

In another part there was a little circle of well known actors and actresses, all earnestly engaged with the same topic.

The centre of the largest apartment appeared to be filled with such ladies of quality as might consider themselves of the greatest influence in all the great concerns of fashion. There was a most imposing display amongst them, of dresses and jewels—they all wore powder in their high head-dresses—all wore hoops—the majority were well rouged, and many had patches.

The most important person in the group was a little shrivelled old woman, with peculiar vivacious eyes and a sharp nose, well rouged cheeks, and a vast hoop, who was easily distinguishable from her companions, not only by her singular appearance, but by an uncommonly ugly little pug dog that she carried under her left arm—the hand belonging to which held a handsome snuff-box, and the other was constantly employed in supplying her nostrils with its contents.

She talked incessantly, in a loud, sharp,

tone, something between scolding and complaining; and her penetrating eyes darted from one to another of her fair associates, as she spoke, with a look that seemed as uninviting as that of the disagreeable little beast tucked so close to her side.

It was very evident that this was "the original," who was so universally abused, and so universally run after. Yes, she was Lady Furbelow, and it was Lady Furbelow in her glory. She knew herself to be the envy of all the stately dowagers, who had rushed to her assembly on hearing the attraction it would possess; and she took more snuff, and looked more spiteful at them than ever, as she chuckled over her own superiority in the valuable art of attracting company to her house.

The stately old dowagers, to do them justice, behaved themselves extremely well: they were bursting with spleen at the thought of Lady Furbelow having so great an advantage; and a plethoric Duchess, who had with incalculable difficulty procured, to

grace her routs, a North American chief and his squaw—and a dropsical Countess, who, at great expense, had secured for her parties the Russian prince Bamboozleumoff, and two genuine train-oil-drinking aide-de-camps,—only by incessant fanning could keep themselves from hysterics.

The younger ladies of the party appeared to regard their friend's advantage with more philosophy. The fact was, they were so eager to experience the gratification they had been promised—an introduction to the popular author—that all minor feelings were swallowed up in that of curiosity.

Ladies of fashion, in the days we are illustrating, had not the most remote thought of putting their fashionable thoughts upon fashionable paper, for the purpose of their being published in some fashionable annual. The dear creatures would not give themselves the trouble of writing, nor their friends the much greater trouble of reading their lucubrations—in marked contrast to their successors in this scribbling age, when every

lady takes to her three volumes post octavo, as naturally as a poodle takes to the water.

The difference was very much in favour of the ladies of the last century. Instead of exhausting paper and print, the funds of publishers, and the patience of the reader, the *belles-esprits* of 1744 had time to look at works of merit and genius—they being then the rarest of existing luxuries. The book that took the taste of the town was sure of being in universal request; and the fortunate author was flattered, feasted, and *fêted*, by all the great people who could secure him as a guest.

Those golden days have long since vanished; the merit which would have obtained for its possessor an animated rivalry of every person of quality to shew him attention, passes by almost unheeded. Some rare instance of good fortune may occur, to place the successful author a guest at great men's feasts—or an instance equally rare may be found, of sympathy and appreciation among ladies of fashion: but, unfortunately, men

of letters have quite gone out of fashion since Tom Thumb came in.

We cannot stop to inquire whether the change which has made their patrons and patronesses their rivals, has, or has not, been advantageous to the community at large: we are, however, quite certain, that if literature has lost anything, fashion has gained nothing by it.

Sir Walter Scott was the last author by profession for whom people of fashion affected to feel anything like the interest which such genius as his ought to excite; but then it is believed that he owed this much more to his rank as a baronet, than to his distinction as a *litterateur*. He was one of their own order, therefore they could indulge in a little enthusiasm.

In the middle of the last century, there is no doubt that this enthusiasm was often very extravagant, and quite as frequently very much misplaced. Authors of the smallest calibre passed for guns of prodigious weight; but this is a common mistake, even

in the better-read nineteenth century; for now the only qualification society can claim for the most ponderous pieces of its literary artillery, exists in their undoubted right to be classed among the great bores.

With Lady Furbelow, literature was a passion. She was enthusiastic in its cause—at least as far as poetry and romance were connected with it—and a popular poet or romancist was sure to be patronized by her ladyship with a zeal which shewed the excess of her admiration. It is true that literature was not her only passion—pug-dogs and point-lace—Chelsea-china and Louis Quatorze snuff-boxes—had as ample a place in her heart; but there were certain things that rendered her ladyship's passion for the *Belles Lettres*, at this period, more deep and powerful than any passion she had ever before experienced.

The author of the romance which had so much taken with the town, had placed entire confidence in her ladyship; and, as he happened to enjoy the rare distinction of being

an especial favourite with her, and was, moreover, the son of a man with whom she had carried on a flirtation of twenty years' standing, her zeal for the author, and enthusiasm about his work, are readily accounted for.

We must leave Lady Furbelow to expend her high-flown panegyrics with her peculiar liberality, while we mark the entrance into the suite of apartments of Sir Robert Walpole. Although he was thoroughly acquainted with the powerful combination of politicians of various shades, that the next day were to put their designs against him into execution, his cheerful features were more cheerful than ever; that countenance, so expressive of good humour, never had looked so pleasant. With a great portion of the company he was regarded as a doomed man. The strength of the opposing faction had latterly so increased, that they considered themselves too powerful to care about secrecy—indeed, the disgrace of the Minister was spoken of as such a certain

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thing, that many persons who would have been but too proud of gaining the slightest notice from him, now were nervously anxious to avoid his recognition.

If Sir Robert saw this, it evidently did not trouble him, for he proceeded on his course apparently in the most jovial humour with himself and everybody, stopping occasionally to exchange a few words with an acquaintance, or expend a jest or two with a boon companion. It was observed that the Minister made the longest stay with gentlemen who were Members of Parliament; and what was more extraordinary, they were known to be opposed to the Minister's policy. In most instances his advances were but coldly received; but, strange to say, this coolness passed off very rapidly, and when Sir Robert moved away, their parting salutations were of the most cordial description.

"How do, Solemnchaps? Monstrous glad to see you."

"Your servant, Sir Robert," replied a sullen looking personage, with a stiff bow.

“Wanted to tell you, my dear Solemnchaps, some prodigious good news I have for you, respecting that situation in the Excise, I’ve been trying so long to get for your son.”

“Thank you, Sir Robert,” said the stiff old gentleman, his features, however, relaxing considerably.

“Very glad to say I’ve succeeded at last, my dear friend. There were two hundred applicants—for it is well known to be a place of eight hundred a year, and nothing to do, my dear Solemnchaps: but I remembered my promise to an old friend, and I feel the greatest pleasure in the world in being the first to tell him of his son’s good fortune.”

“Well, that ’s mighty civil of you, Sir Robert, I must say,” exclaimed the delighted father, “and you may depend, Sir Robert, I’ll not be unmindful of your goodness.”

The Minister, with a cordial shake of the hand, which secured him a vote he much wanted, passed on to another Member, who

received his advances more stiffly than they had been received even by the greatly gratified personage from whom he had just parted.

“ One word, my dear Sir Gregory Bumptious, one word for your private ear, my excellent friend, respecting your nephew, the Dean. I took the earliest opportunity to speak to his Majesty about the vacant bishoprick. Make your mind easy, my dear Sir Gregory; I am happy to inform you the worthy Dean will be Bishop Bumptious before the week’s over: and if I can serve you, my dear friend, in any other way, I beg you will let me know at once.”

If Sir Gregory had heard the King prefer his eloquence to that of Cicero, he could not have been more gratified than he was at hearing that his favourite nephew was a Bishop. From that moment the vote of Sir Gregory Bumptious, and those of the friends he could influence by his example, were the undoubted property of the Minister.

Sir Robert again proceeded on his way,

unquestionably in a rejoicing mood. He had not got far before he was seized by the button by a very influential and very tiresome Member of the Lower House, whom Bolingbroke's party had counted as their own.

Colonel Fribble at once proceeded to pour out all he knew and all he fancied about the new romance and its author. Sir Robert had already heard a good deal about this popular work, of which he had read a portion, and he professed to be greatly delighted. He listened with marvellous patience to all the tiresome conjectures and tedious remarks of the Colonel; and did not succeed in emancipating his button until he had averred, with the most becoming gravity, it was the opinion of a certain exalted personage, that no one could have written so admirable a story but his amusing old acquaintance, Colonel Fribble himself.

As Sir Robert went laughing away, he felt the pleasant conviction that he had again

bagged his game; for the Colonel would have suffered martyrdom, rather than have voted against a Minister who had given him such agreeable intelligence. Walpole knew that he had a vast deal of this kind of work to go through, and that his time was limited. He crossed the room, and, after an extraordinary display of diplomacy, secured the hearty co-operation of certain waverers, who were only to be purchased by important honours, for which they had long languished in vain.

There again the popularity of the new romance was forced upon his attention, by his overhearing a very animated discussion upon its merits, in which an Archbishop, two noble Dukes, and the Lord Chancellor were busily engaged. For a few minutes he joined in the discussion, and managed very adroitly to secure six votes, by testifying his admiration of the identical passages that had just been so warmly approved of by a very distinguished Member of the House of Peers.

While he is proceeding more cheerfully than ever to another group, we will say a word or two for his younger son, who had stepped out of his chair and entered the house as his father's carriage was driven away. It was not long before he was recognised by a circle of his witty associates, who, as usual, were exercising their privilege of uttering smart things at the expense of the company. The torpid George Selwyn, the brilliant Charles Townshend, the facetious Hanbury Williams, the friendly Colonel Conway, and the rest of the coterie, were in full flow. Imperceptibly the Colonel had led the conversation to the new romance, and smart indeed was the running fire directed against it. In their hands every character was a jest—every scene was a source of amusement—and the whole story was the greatest burlesque that had ever been printed.

Horace Walpole was called in to share in their pleasantries; and his cousin contrived that he should hear all the *bon mots* that had

been expended on the subject. The Minister's son laughed very heartily at the facetiousness of his friends, and joined with great spirit in ridiculing the romance writer. It seemed evident enough, that he was not more favourably impressed towards him than themselves; and after expressing one or two epigrammatic ideas on the said romance, worthy of a Selwyn, he was allowed to escape, and pay his respects to the hostess. It is impossible to convey any adequate idea of the intensity of the welcome he received from Lady Furbelow, immediately he presented himself. So completely did the sight of him render her regardless of all other mundane affairs, that had not the unfortunate pug under her arm given an admonitory yelp, there is little doubt he would have been squeezed to death, during the vigorous demonstrations she was giving her young friend of her satisfaction at his appearance.

As soon as the effervescence of her ladyship's enthusiasm had sufficiently abated to enable her to shew a little common sense,

she turned to her dowager friends, with a glance of spiteful triumph not one of them ever forgot, and taking the Minister's son by the hand, introduced him to them in a most grandiloquent speech, as her inestimable friend, the author of "The Castle of Otranto."

The dowagers were deeply impressed with the agreeable distinction of having before them the writer of the fashionable romance; and many eloquent exclamations, and many still more eloquent looks and gestures were expended, in shewing the high sense they entertained of the honour conferred upon them. Before they had quite recovered their astonishment, Lady Furbelow introduced him to the other members of the conclave, who were equally impressed with the extraordinary favour they were receiving at her ladyship's hands.

In the group around her, she had omitted one lady—unquestionably much the youngest and much the loveliest of the company: but the latter seemed to hang back, either as if she

cared less for the compliment than her companions, or was so shy she would rather avoid it. Whatever were her thoughts and feelings on this point, she was allowed very little time for their indulgence. Lady Furbelow, with immense unction, and an overwhelming sense of her own dignity, addressed herself to the apparently cold, unimpassioned girl, as she led her valued friend towards her.

“Well, child,” she exclaimed, in a tone of exultation, “I have here a vast honour for you—an honour you will be glad enough to quote, I will wager a guinea to a copper token, when you have become as old in the world as I am:—I present to you one of the most truly illustrious characters of the age—I bring before you the author of the most admired work that has ever been seen in this country or in any other—I have the happiness of introducing to you Mr. Horace Walpole. Mr. Walpole, allow me the pleasure of making you known to my niece, Arabella Falkland.”

If a bomb-shell had fallen between them, it could not have created more surprise than did this unexpected meeting of the separated lovers. Lord Falkland's daughter had shared in the general enthusiasm for the author of the new romance, which she had read with intense enjoyment; and the surprise she experienced on finding who was the individual who had been the object of her aunt's furious praises, made her quite forget her indignation.

But the next moment, the repulsive idea of the man she had so fondly loved, intriguing with so discreditable a woman as Lady Archibald Hamilton, presented itself to her mind, and she assumed a cold and stately carriage—very different indeed to the cordial ecstasies with which the gentleman had just been received by her associates.

Our hero quickly found the pleasure he experienced on beholding thus unexpectedly the stately beauty he had lost sight of so mysteriously at Bath, disappear before the frigid reception she thought proper to give

him; and then came the recollection of the circumstances under which he last beheld her—the withering scorn she so curtly expressed when his name was mentioned—and the contempt that lurked in every line of her letter. These recollections readily enabled him to exhibit a degree of *hauteur* towards her, quite as marked as was her chilling reserve towards him.

Lady Furbelow assumed to be prodigiously astonished at beholding what she called the unaccountable conduct of her niece and her inestimable friend towards each other. She looked her sharpest look, and spoke in her sharpest voice, to her young kinswoman: but this was not likely to be of any advantage to the other party.

“My dear Lady Furbelow,” said he to his offended hostess, “I think your charming niece is labouring under some misapprehension. When I last had the happiness of seeing her, I was grieved to find that she had been led into an error respecting me, which error I have never had an opportunity

to remove, though this might be done in the most satisfactory manner in a very few minutes."

"You have met my niece before, then?"

"I had the honour of forming her acquaintance in Italy."

Lady Furbelow took a copious supply of snuff on hearing this reply to her question—the old dowagers looked very inquisitive—the younger ladies very mystified. Arabella Falkland wore an air of the most perfect indifference: to all appearance, the affair did not concern her in the least.

Lady Furbelow continued to glance searchingly from her literary *protégé* to her beautiful niece, and continued to take snuff with a vast deal of vehemence, that must have much incommoded her four-footed companion; but she was not the least enlightened by either process. All that was plain to her was, that there was something wrong, and that her chief surprise of the evening had miscarried, through some unaccountable vagary on the part of her kinswoman. She

saw that something must be done immediately, to repair the mischief already committed. Her two great attractions—the greatest beauty in town, and the most popular writer—must not be suffered to fall into a misunderstanding, which might, in the eyes of her dowager rivals, mar the triumph of the night.

“ Arabella, my love,” exclaimed her ladyship, doing her best to look affectionate and amiable, “ I am positive you have fallen into some mistake respecting my dear young friend here. He has long been known to me as the most truly honourable gentleman I ever met with; and as the author of the admirable romance you have lately been reading with such intense pleasure, he is entitled to every praise for talent and cleverness so warm an admirer of both can confer upon him. I trust, child, you will at once get rid of any foolish prejudice political animosity may have engendered, and that you will learn to esteem him according to his deserts.”

“Of *that*, be assured, there is no fear, my dear aunt,” replied the young lady, with considerable emphasis. “The source from which I received my last impressions of Mr. Walpole, very possibly was not entitled to much consideration, as it happened to be himself.”

Miss Falkland with a proud step walked to another part of the apartment, without casting another look at her former lover. This movement caused various effects in the little circle. The old dowagers exchanged looks of considerable significance; their juniors appeared much astonished; and Lady Furbelow took snuff as though she had determined to clear the box at once. The gentleman was the first to break the awkward silence that ensued; and he, in a few words, lamented that Miss Falkland should have misjudged him, but added, with an air almost as disdainful as her own, as it was a matter of no importance, and one that must very soon be set right without any trouble on his part, he did not think it worth any further notice.

He then addressed himself to his hostess, who, as though to make amends for the rudeness of her niece, was amazingly attentive and complimentary: the old dowagers immediately fell into the same vein, the rest of the group shewed themselves no less favourably disposed towards him, and in a very few minutes he was enjoying as liberal a share of incense as ever was showered by the High Priestesses of Fashion upon their temporary idols.

He was paying every possible respect to the flatteries of two duchesses, a countess in her own right, and the three greatest heiresses in England, when his attention was drawn from them by overhearing a most extravagant eulogy spoken by Lady Furberlow. Believing he was about to be presented to another of her ladyship's fashionable lady friends, he turned round with due alacrity. His surprise may be imagined when he met the features of his father, wearing a look of such intense pride and gratification, as assured him the despised

younger son had at last completely succeeded in his appeal to his sympathies.

It is impossible to say which experienced the most satisfaction at that moment. The Minister's delight was as deep as it was fervent. It was a surprise for which he was totally unprepared. It appeared to have awakened him from a long and troubled dream, to a consciousness of real happiness it was impossible to appreciate too highly. The congratulations he expressed to his son, as he warmly shook him by the hand, at once dissolved an avalanche of unpleasant memories that had so long been collecting upon the mind of the latter. He forgot all he had suffered—he forgot even Arabella Falkland, and what he believed to be her caprice—he forgot Lady Furbelow and her friends—he forgot everything but the happiness his father's commendations had created.

Lady Furbelow, however, did not forget herself. The complete success of this grand feature in her surprises of the evening she looked upon as her crowning triumph; and

took her last pinch of snuff with a glance at her dowager rivals, which told them, plainer than any language could have done, that now they were at perfect liberty to go home and die of envy as soon as they pleased.

CHAPTER X.

THE GREAT DEBATE.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE had taken up his residence in the house he had provided for Horace; and an arrangement more satisfactory to both parties could not by any possibility have been thought of. The Minister had now learned how active a partizan he had in his younger son—how affectionately he had watched over his interests. He had learned also to whom he was indebted for those masterly pamphlets which had so ably

defended his administration, and so cleverly exposed the unprincipled conduct of his enemies.

To this was added the satisfaction of discovering, that in this secret friend he beheld the favourite author of the gay world to which he belonged, and that this favourite was his own son. His happiness was sometimes dashed with a few uncomfortable reflections concerning the indifference he had manifested towards him. How much he had shewn himself the Minister, and how little the father! But, as he found out the value of the treasure he had so neglected, he hoped there was yet time for him to retrieve his error.

Yet he was not without some misgivings. It was unfortunate that he should have made this happy discovery at a time of so much difficulty to him—at a time that even *he* had been forced to consider as almost the last hour of his political existence. He had found the confederacy much stronger than it had at first appeared to him; and although

the timely information he had obtained of their plans had enabled him to make preparations to defeat them, on a thorough knowledge of the great strength of the Opposition, he could not help doubting the issue.

Horace enjoyed a serenity of mind he had never enjoyed before, as his father, after a long interview of the most confidential character, seemed to ask his counsel, whilst he granted him his fullest confidence. He was sensible of the very critical position in which the Minister stood ; but the happy atmosphere of his own mind reflected a portion of its brightness on the gloomy state of his father's affairs, and he felt assured the ground that had been lost might be retrieved.

They sat in the library together, in affectionate proximity ; the son's hand in that of his father, whose good-humoured face expressed unusual emotion.

"Ah, my dear Horace!" he exclaimed, "you little know the troubles and difficulties that beset the path of a statesman who holds the first place in the confidence of his

sovereign. He must have no feelings, no ties, no predilections, that do not belong to the state. For him the affections of the heart are as in one vowed to celibacy. The Minister must have no affections, he must have no heart. He is a monk, whose God is his King, and whose Church is his Government.

“ The man who holds an independent position in society, can cultivate the best and kindest relations with his fellow-men—can regard them as brothers, and apply to them as friends; but the position of the Minister is exactly the reverse—it far more nearly approaches that of the Arab of the desert, whose hand is against every man, and every man’s hand against him; for such is his position with those who are not bound to him by the strong ties of self-interest, or the hollow friendship of political partizanship. From the rest of the world the Minister must anticipate an endless conflict. Misrepresentation, abuse, contempt, slander, and ridicule, will meet him at every turn.

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Let his measures be based on the most comprehensive philanthropy, he must expect to have them denounced as the most selfish upon record. Ay, let him do all that human wisdom and human foresight can effect for the good of his country, he must reconcile himself to impeachment for having betrayed her interests.

“He may, perhaps, take unusual pains to recommend himself to men of all parties—he may patronize merit, wherever he can find it, without regard to political opinion—he may pay as much respect to the suggestions of his enemies as to those of his friends—and what will be the result? He must make up his mind to be burned in effigy, caricatured, lampooned in private, and hooted in public, to an extent never experienced by the most unpopular of his predecessors.

“He ultimately finds it to his advantage to act upon a more selfish line of policy—he studies the vices of men instead of their virtues—he relies upon their follies instead

of their wisdom—he tests their principles by the touch-stone of interest, and soon discovers how strong he can make himself by a sufficient appreciation of their weakness. Every one has his price, my dear boy; and if you can only afford to buy him at his own appreciation, you may drive a bargain with the sternest patriot, as easily as with the most venal placeman.”

“Your view of human nature, my dear father,” said his son, “is very humiliating.”

“Not more humiliating than it is just, Horace,” replied the Minister, with bitterness. “It is the result of a pretty extensive experience of mankind; and the last evidence is to be found in my being left to the uninterrupted enjoyment of this prolonged interview. Often has it occurred to me in a morning, when receiving visitors, to have every reception room crowded with eager candidates for my favours: then it was known, Horace, that I was the most powerful subject in the realm, and had at my disposal more patronage than any ten

men in the kingdom: now that it is believed I am powerless, and on the brink of disgrace, all my troops of friends avoid me like a pestilence. Horace, my dear boy, never desire to be a Minister—never seek the possession of political power.”

“ Yet, such has been for years my cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night,” observed the younger Walpole, impressively. “ I have always thought that nothing could be so covetable in this world, as the position of the most influential member of a great government. I have long accustomed myself to look forward to the possession of high rank, great wealth, and vast political influence, as the greatest desiderata of human ambition.”

“ If you live to find your ambitious dreams realized—which is not unlikely,” said the father, gravely, “ you will quickly waken to a sense of their insufficiency. But in talking, I must not forget the necessity there is for my doing. This afternoon, my enemies are to make their grand attack in the Com-

mons: all the craft of Bolingbroke, all the hypocrisy of Pulteney, will now be permitted to display itself. I have much to do before we meet in the House."

The father and son parted with that degree of mutual confidence and mutual sympathy, which could only exist in such near relatives drawn together by some very pressing danger. Horace could see that his father was much less sanguine of the result of the impending contest than himself; but with the intense admiration he felt for the Minister's talents, it seemed impossible to doubt he would triumph over his enemies, strong as they were: and, this result accomplished, what a golden dream of honour and greatness visited him!—a grateful Sovereign, an applauding senate, a delighted people, seemed to rival each other in testifying their admiration of the genius of Walpole; and he, as the great Minister's coadjutor and successor, would be regarded as worthy to share with him a nation's respect and affection.

Having passed a sufficient time in amusing

himself with these agreeable chimeras, Horace hurried to the House, resolved to watch the movements of his father's adversaries, with the fullest determination to take advantage of any circumstance favourable to his cause, that might occur in the course of the coming struggle.

There could not be a question, when he entered the walls of St. Stephen's, that something of very unusual importance was there about to take place. The Members were thronging in, with every appearance of being engaged in a business of extraordinary interest. The leaders of the Opposition were surrounded by anxious groups of their followers, to whom it seemed as though they were explaining the order of the approaching proceedings. In some places a knot of county members might be seen rehearsing amongst themselves the grand business of the day; and it was easy to distinguish amongst them the decided, the vacillating, the lukewarm Ministerialist, and the hesitating Oppositionist.

The great men of the Pulteney party seemed confident and exulting, while the members of the Ministry wore generally an anxious look, that appeared to foretell their own defeat. Each party had made the most strenuous exertions to collect all its available forces; from which circumstance it frequently happened, that the crowd had to make way for some desperate invalid wrapped in a blanket, or some tottering octogenarian trembling upon crutches. The galleries were crowded, and there was a considerable number of spectators below the bar—prominent among whom might be seen the handsome features and stately figure of Lord Bolingbroke. He had placed himself there to feast his eyes with the disgrace of his hated schoolfellow; he was convinced Walpole's hour had come, and he could not resist the temptation of triumphing over his enemy.

Horace looked for his father. He expected to see him with an anxious countenance, busily drilling his followers. He

glanced around the spacious chamber in vain. Sir Robert was not to be seen. Perhaps he was engaged in expediting the approach of some dilatory adherents, whose presence he felt essential to his interests. At last he espied him in a corner, with an inveterate joker, laughing as though he had not a care in the world, evidently as though all ideas of impeachment had been blown to the winds.

Presently the Minister left that obscure place, and made his way to his usual seat in the House, exchanging greetings with those of his friends who still affected to be true to him, with a happy indifference, that caused many who had made up their minds to his disgrace, to have considerable doubts of it. Had Sir Robert had the whole House at his disposal, he could not have appeared on better terms with himself and them, than he did at that moment.

As Bolingbroke caught the happy expression of his rival's features, a ghastly smile deformed his own. But the conviction he

had of the overpowering force he had brought to the contest, re-assured him. He would not allow a doubt of his coming triumph to disturb his gratifying reflections.

The debate was opened by Sandys, a small patriot of the last century, in a speech of considerable length and equal acrimony, reviewing the measures of Walpole at home and abroad, and accusing him of all the faults and crimes it was possible for a bad Minister to commit. In conclusion, he stated, "If it should be asked why I impute all these evils to one person, I reply, because one person has grasped in his own hands every branch of government; that one person has attained the sole direction of affairs, monopolized all the favours of the Crown, compassed the disposal of all places, pensions, titles, ribands, as well as all preferments, civil, military, and ecclesiastical; that one person has made a blind submission to his will, both in elections and Parliament, the only terms of present favour and future expectation."

Horace felt every nerve in his body vibrate as he heard these accusations hurled at his father; nor was his indignation lessened by the loud cheers which encouraged the attack. Sandys ended with a motion, "*That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, that he would be graciously pleased to remove the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole from his Majesty's presence and counsels for ever.*"

The young Member experienced an agony of impatience to reply to this audacious motion, but the deep interest he felt in the question seemed to take from him all ability to express his thoughts; and he heard Lord Limerick second it, and old Mr. Wortley Montagu, following on the same side, propose that Sir Robert should retire from the House, like a criminal, while his conduct was being examined.

What would his son then have given for a flow of language to have covered the insulter with the contempt he merited! But he found himself powerless—bound like a vic-

tim to the stake, and was doomed to hear the atrocious proposal gravely debated, till the sense of the House was found to be against it.

Pulteney then resumed the general question—and it was easy to see, from the similarity existing in the speech of Sandys and his own, that they were from the same mint. It was true Pulteney had once been a warm friend of Walpole, but political rivalry had turned their friendship into enmity; and, notwithstanding all his professions in favour of freedom, as in the instance of Bolingbroke, envy of the better fortune of his friend was the main-spring of his opposition.

He was followed in the same spirit by Pitt, whose first advances on the ladder of political greatness were made to pull down the only man the country had produced who deserved to precede him in its highest elevation. Various orators of less eminence took up the same strain, and Bolingbroke smiled triumphantly as he observed how many influential persons were among them.

All this time the Minister stood unmoved; not a frown disturbed the happy serenity of his features—not a care clouded the good humour of his jovial countenance. He smiled at the charges of Sandys, as at the gestures of a puppet, the source of whose movements he readily detected; he smiled still more at the accusations of Pulteney, like a schoolboy at a difficult problem, of which he has the key in his pocket.

Such of his father's friends as ventured to volunteer a defence for him, Horace thought feeble and constrained. A new feature appeared in the debate when Edward Harley, the brother of the late Lord Treasurer, ventured to make some allusions to the part Walpole had formerly taken against his relative; and professing he would not descend to retaliation, left the House with his brother. This example was followed by Shippen—a very influential member—but from a very different cause. Though an opponent, the Minister had once conferred an eminent service on a friend of his. The

recollection of this induced him to leave the House, in company with twenty-three persons who usually voted with him.

This movement the leaders of the Opposition regarded with anything but satisfaction. Pulteney looked annoyed, and Bolingbroke frowned menacingly. They, however, comforted themselves with the conviction, that they were still strong enough to carry their measure. If any one felt real pleasure at this demonstration in favour of the unpopular Minister, it was his son. But no time was left him to indulge in such feelings. He saw his father rise, and immediately a profound silence reigned in the House.

The mass of the Opposition could not help regarding with some respect a member of their own body, who for so long a period had been the first man in the country—had been the moving power of all the machinery of the State, and had so long continued to infuse the spirit of life into their deliberations. Many, too, had enjoyed his sumptuous hospitality—had experienced his friendly cour-

tesy—had received his favours; and they felt that the least they could do, when he was thus put upon his defence before the country, was to listen decently to what he had to say for himself.

As soon as the Minister found he had secured an attentive audience, he commenced a masterly defence. He began by classifying his opponents into three divisions—the Whigs—the disaffected Tories, calling themselves “patriots,”—and the *boys*, or what would now be styled “the New Generation;”—for, as it often happens, the youngest men in the House were the noisiest of the Minister’s opponents. Of the first class he spoke indulgently, as if with a wish to conciliate, rather than to widen the breach that existed between him and them. But with the second class he exhibited no such tenderness. He exposed the paltry motives of their opposition to him in the most masterly manner, and laughed to scorn their assumption of the name of patriots.

“Gentlemen have talked a great deal of

patriotism," he exclaimed;—" a venerable word, when duly practised. But I am sorry to say, that of late it has been so much hackneyed about, that it is in danger of falling into disgrace; the very idea of true patriotism is lost, and the term has been prostituted to the very worst of purposes. A patriot, Sir!" he continued, addressing the Speaker, with marked emphasis. " Why, patriots spring up like mushrooms. I could raise fifty of them within the four-and-twenty hours. I have raised many of them in one night. It is but refusing to gratify an unreasonable or an insolent demand, and up starts a patriot. I have never been afraid of making patriots, but I disclaim and despise all their efforts. But this pretended virtue proceeds from personal malice, and from disappointed ambition. There is not a man amongst them, whose particular aim I am not able to ascertain, and from what motive they have entered into the lists of Opposition."

Many shrank under this well-merited

castigation, but Bolingbroke and Pulteney were stung to the quick by the allusions to them in its concluding sentences.

The Minister then entered into an elaborate defence of his foreign policy, exposing at every step the ignorance of his enemies, as well as their malice. From this he proceeded to the consideration of affairs at home, in which he was equally successful in proving that he had neglected nothing that was proper under the circumstances, and had done nothing which could with justice be pronounced injurious to the State.

There was no doubt, from the profound attention with which the whole House were listening, that he was carrying with him the convictions of all who were free from the trammels of party. But few could look without deep interest upon the spectacle before them, of the great Minister, whose name had been so powerful throughout Europe, turning, like a noble stag at bay, upon his hunters, and while defending himself from their attack, goring those of his

assailants who ventured to make themselves most conspicuous.

He finally proceeded to the charges against himself—which, by the way, were of a very general character. “What have been the effects,” he inquired, “of the corruption, ambition, and avarice, with which I am so abundantly charged? Have I ever been suspected of being corrupted? A strange phenomenon—a corrupter, himself not corrupt! Is ambition imputed to me? Why, then, do I still continue a Commoner? I, who refused a white staff and a Peerage! I had, indeed, like to have forgotten the little ornament about my shoulders (the ribbon of the Order of the Garter), which gentlemen have so repeatedly mentioned in terms of sarcastic obloquy. But sure, though this may be regarded with envy or indignation in another place, it cannot be supposed to raise any resentment in this House, where many may be pleased to see those honours which their ancestors have worn, restored again to the Commons.

Have I given any symptoms of an avaricious disposition? Have I obtained any grants from the Crown, since I have been placed at the head of the Treasury? Has my conduct been different from that which others in the same station would have followed? Have I acted wrong in giving the place of Auditor to my son, and in providing for my own family? I trust that their advancement will not be imputed to me as a crime, unless it shall be proved that I placed them in offices of trust and responsibility for which they were unfit.

“But while I unequivocally deny that I am sole and prime Minister, and that to my influence and direction all the measures of Government must be attributed, yet I will not shrink from the responsibility which attaches to the post I have the honour to hold; and should, during the long period in which I have sat upon this bench, any one step taken by Government be proved to be either disgraceful or disadvantageous to the nation, I am ready to hold myself accountable.

“To conclude: though I shall always be proud of the honour of any trust or confidence from his Majesty, yet I shall always be ready to remove from his councils and presence when he thinks fit; and, therefore, I should think myself very little concerned in the event of the present question, if it were not for the encroachment that will thereby be made upon the prerogatives of the Crown. But I must think that an address to his Majesty to remove one of his servants, without so much as alleging any particular crime against him, is one of the greatest encroachments that was ever made upon the prerogatives of the Crown; and therefore, for the sake of my master, without any regard for my own, I hope that all those that have a due regard for our constitution, and for the rights and prerogatives of the Crown, without which our constitution cannot be preserved, will be against this motion.”

Sir Robert did not conclude his speech till four o'clock in the morning. A division

was instantly called; and some minutes of anxious suspense were passed by the leaders of both parties, and particularly by the Minister's son, while waiting for the tellers to go through their labours. It was impossible for Walpole's friends to say how the question would be decided; but Bolingbroke was still confident he had so skilfully undermined the influence of his old schoolfellow, that there would be an overwhelming majority on the side of the Tories—and Pulteney had too strong a reliance on the patriotism of the House, to doubt such would be the result.

The division was presently announced:—for the motion to remove Sir Robert Walpole, 106; against the motion, 290; majority for Sir Robert Walpole, 184. When Bolingbroke heard this complete overthrow of all his schemes, he rushed from the House, overwhelmed with mortification, and in fit of disgust of political life No. 4, hastened to bury himself once more in solitude, and learn consolation in his hermitage at Battersea.

A similar measure had been brought forward that evening in the House of Lords, which, despite the influence of the Prince of Wales, was disposed of by a majority of nearly two to one. The Minister, so far from being sent in disgrace from his post, was thought to be more powerful than ever, and at his *levée* the next morning he had no reason to complain of being neglected. The house would hardly contain the immense multitude that flocked to assure him of their cordial support. Even Bubb Doddington thought it might be conducive to the interests of his expected peerage, to go and congratulate his "excellent friend" on his success.

CHAPTER XI.

A ROYAL FRIENDSHIP.

THOUGH Sir Robert Walpole had once more triumphed over his enemies, and the clever Bolingbroke had been again driven to calm his restless spirit in the rural solitudes of Battersea, the position of the former was soon found to be daily becoming more insecure. His adversaries appeared to gain strength at every defeat; and the more they were beaten, the more fierce they became in their attacks.

Pulteney's patriotism burned fiercer than ever: the recent debate smothered the fire for a time, but, like all ineffectual attempts to check a great conflagration, they only caused the flame to blaze more furiously. The Prince was easily induced to look upon the Minister's success as a personal affront to himself, and taught to regard him as an obstacle in the way of his interests, that must be got rid of at any hazard. Even Bubb Doddington, finding that he was not nearer the desired peerage than before, was again becoming very busy as man-of-all-work for his royal master, in losing his money and his time.

Like the sound of the trumpet to the war-horse turned out to graze, was the rumour of new political combinations against his hated rival, to the mortified Bolingbroke. The wrestler thrown by his antagonist while over-confident of his strength, was not more disposed to begin a more dangerous rivalry, than was the philosopher, after the heavy fall he had received from his political

opponent, to commence with him a combat *à l'outrance*. The reflection that all his scheming, all his cleverness, all his underhanded intrigues against his early friend and schoolfellow, had had no other result than to cover himself with shame, stung him almost to frenzy. He eagerly responded to the advances of the still condescending Prince of Wales, and he was readily convinced by the arguments of the still patriotic Pulteney. His last fit of disgust of public life was soon found to be the shortest of them all; for in one brief month philosophy was once more cast aside, and plotting, scheming, and intriguing, were again in earnest requisition.

During this period, Horace Walpole was enjoying himself entirely after his heart's content. The most complete confidence existed between him and his parent; and the latter, proud of his son's talents, and of the attention they were exciting, held out hopes to him, which even *his* ambition, high as it had sometimes soared, had never pictured.

But Horace was too happy in his present position to care much for any future, however brilliant. The content he experienced in seeing his father retain the greatness he believed he had supported with so much advantage to the country, caused him not to want to be disturbed by the cares and anxieties inseparable from embarking in a career of his own, however advantageous it might appear.

All those humiliating reflections which had arisen out of his apparently unimportant position in the family were now forgotten; he had either ceased to remember that he was a younger son, or entertained a different view of the case. For what was it now to him that he was born after his brothers? Though this fact might be advantageous to them in pecuniary matters, he perceived that he had become heir to his father's affections, and was indifferent to any other heritage. His elder brothers might assume as much consequence as they pleased; he would leave them to the enjoyment of their fancied

superiority. He knew that he was next his father's heart—he cared not how much nearer they were to his estates.

There was one thing, however, which did sometimes disturb the even current of his thoughts. Pride is a powerful agent, but Love is omnipotent. Our hero felt sufficiently indignant at the treatment he had received from Arabella Falkland; it was unpardonable, he thought, that she should persist in a misconception, when a most satisfactory explanation might at once be obtained. Then his wounded self-love would give way a little, before his apprehensions for her safety, arising from the perilous manner in which she had committed herself with the conspirators at Bath; and he could not avoid recurring to the striking proof she had then betrayed of her anxiety for his safety, when assisting his escape.

These recollections would soon become more retrospective. Again would he retrace those moonlight walks in the orange grove, when her ivory arms rested on his shoulder,

and her noble figure was supported by his embrace—when her speaking eyes, eloquent with passion, were appealing to his own, and her mellow voice breathed its tender music into his ear—when the balmy Italian air was impregnated with perfume, and all around was a scene of overpowering beauty and exquisite quietude, worthy to form the paradise of two passionate hearts. The thrill of ecstasy which this vision of past happiness created, recalled him to the painful consciousness that the demon of politics had entered that Eden, and of its rare and consummate bliss left him nothing but the recollection.

He imagined the proud daughter of Lord Falkland still nursing her indignation at the proof of her lover's unworthiness she considered he had displayed—still obdurate, still irreconcilable, still haughty and contemptuous. In this, however, he was somewhat in error. On further reflection, the young lady entertained an impression that she might have been too hasty. She recalled

his words; more than this, she recalled all the deep impressions of his sincerity and honour he had left there, on their forced separation at Rome, which she knew could not be effaced from her heart—she weighed them well, and she began to doubt she had done him justice.

She even condescended to make inquiries of her aunt, respecting the assumed intimacy of her lover with Lady Archibald Hamilton; and though Lady Furbelow loved a little scandal, and any thing but loved Lady Archibald, and was too much a woman of the world to heed such intimacy, had it existed, she was too well conversant with the real state of the case, and too much the friend of Horace Walpole, not to endeavour to remove the prejudices against him her niece had contracted.

The result was as we have just intimated—Miss Falkland began to suspect that she had wronged him. It was unfortunate for him at this time that he had ceased to mix as much in society as he had been in the habit of doing.

He spent most of his leisure with his father, and the rest of his time was occupied either with important state business, or in literary occupations. He did not show himself at Lady Furbelow's assemblies for several weeks.

But Miss Falkland had other prejudices to get rid of. She went heart and hand in the conspiracy in which her beloved father was engaged. She had been taught to regard Sir Robert Walpole as his most formidable enemy; and the more deeply she saw her parent involved in the perilous intrigues of the Jacobites to restore the Pretender, the more vindictive she believed the Minister to be disposed towards him. Her filial love caused her to fancy the confidential Minister of the Usurper, as her friends invariably styled George II., thirsting for his blood. The animosity with which she regarded the father, in course of time prejudiced her against the son. With all the power which the tender associations of the past exerted over her, her devotion to

her parent was such, that she would not entertain a thought, or encourage a feeling, that seemed opposed to his security or happiness.

There is no knowing what might have ensued, had she come to a proper understanding with her lover; but his absence did him great disservice. The mood for reconciliation lasted only till she began to suspect he had become quite indifferent to her, and purposely kept out of her way. When Horace again visited Lady Furbelow, he learned that her niece had, the day previously, received a communication, believed to be from Lord Falkland, which caused her to leave London instantly.

He could obtain no information of her destination, for her Ladyship would talk of nothing but romances. There appeared some mystery in this hasty departure of Miss Falkland, and he could not avoid entertaining fears that it was connected with the conspiracy of the Jacobites he had so strangely discovered.

But he had business of still greater urgency pressing upon him—business that he dared not neglect, even to look after the safety of the woman to whom he was so devotedly attached. The Whigs were again divided, and jealous of the Minister's influence — the Tories again furiously patriotic—"the boys" becoming more audacious in their declamations. The Opposition daily gained strength, and with a pertinacity that would be satisfied with nothing that fell short of their object, they harassed the Government with perpetual divisions: grown wiser by defeat, they took care not to make their demonstrations till there could be no doubt they were in a condition to make them with the effect they desired.

They waited their opportunity; they husbanded their resources; they availed themselves of every advantage to weaken the ranks of the Ministry, and strengthen their own. These tactics were successful in one or two instances—on one occasion Pulteney obtained a small majority. Small as it was,

it was quite sufficient to give confidence to his party, and render the waverers among the Whigs more inclined to abandon their leader.

The Duke of Newcastle was intriguing; and so was Lord Hardwicke, the Lord Chancellor; and so were a good many more of the Whig Peers.

Walpole, finding from a quarter in which he placed considerable confidence, that the Prince of Wales was still the active head of this powerful confederacy, sought to silence his opposition with a bribe of £50,000 per annum; but, unfortunately for the Minister, the patriots were around his Royal Highness; and disposed though he was to obtain this important addition to his income, their representations, that they in a very short time would be able to secure for him a much larger sum, induced him to withstand the temptation, and return the marvellously disinterested reply, that he would listen to no proposals as long as Sir Robert Walpole remained in his Majesty's service.

The Minister tried his never-failing expedient in other high quarters, and, strange to say, with the same want of success. This result would have surprised him less, had he known that in each instance his own tactics had been employed against him.

The Minister continued to be attacked with greater inveteracy—the young patriots were becoming frantic, and the old ones more furious; the divisions followed each other in rapid succession, and it at last became evident he could no longer command a majority. His colleagues now refused to act with him; the public business was at a stand-still, and even to the warmest of his admirers, and the steadiest of his supporters, it was painfully clear there was but one course open to him—*He must resign.*

Horace had been indefatigable in endeavouring to stem the torrent that threatened to annihilate his father's political greatness. All day, and almost all night, he was engaged in making arrangements with his friends to sustain the Walpole interest. But he was

at last made to understand the bitter truth, that the fiat had gone forth—that the Minister, whose greatness had appeared so truly glorious, must cease to exercise those covetable functions. A resignation was inevitable.

Sir Robert had had power in his hands too long, to be easily disposed to give it up. He had fought a good fight—he had challenged his opponents to bring any specific accusation against him; but they did not want accusations—they wanted place, and would have it. He saw no advantage could be obtained by continuing the contest; but with the tact of an old campaigner he contrived to end his days of power by a graceful surrender to his enemies; and his last act was to bestow on the Prince of Wales the promised £50,000 per annum, with valuable posts to two of his friends—which so mollified his Royal Highness, that he vowed henceforth to do him all the service in his power.

We may as well add here, that the overthrow of Walpole was the cause almost of as

much disappointment as satisfaction to his assailants. Those who expected to profit by it most, were signally disappointed. Bolingbroke found himself just where he was: he had hunted the game for the advantage of others. The patriotic Pulteney was induced to refrain from taking office, but affected to be satisfied with a peerage and the disposal of much government patronage; and the Duke of Newcastle, finding there was no chance just then of his becoming premier, was glad enough to retain the post he had hitherto been allowed to fill. Bubb Doddington was equally unfortunate: his promised peerage proved a most tantalizing *mirage*—the nearer he approached it, the further it always receded.

There is one person who, although very little has been said of him, was more affected by this change in the government than any one. This was the King. Even the Minister's son did not take his downfall so much to heart as did his royal master. His Majesty could not forget the terms in which

he had been recommended to Sir Robert by the dying Queen : and the forced separation of that union, which had existed ever since, he could not help regarding as a most cruel divorce.

Finding the retrograde movement of his favourite inevitable, he endeavoured to convert it into a retreat, with all the honours of statesmanship. A day or two previously to Walpole's retirement from his councils, the latter was raised to the peerage with the title of Earl of Orford, and a pension of £4,000 a year. The King's interest in him was still further shewn, by his Majesty interfering personally to prevent his suffering from the vindictive hostility of his triumphant enemies.

But even these testimonies of his regard did not satisfy his Majesty. A lover forcibly parted from his mistress could not have regarded it as a greater calamity, than did George II. this deprivation of his old friend and counsellor. From the time the painful intelligence was communicated to him, that

the intimacy so agreeable to both parties must be dissolved, he seemed like a man to whom comfort must henceforth be a stranger. All his old habits were to be broken up, and he had to transfer his confidence to individuals whom he particularly disliked. Surely never was a monarch in his old age placed in such extremely disagreeable circumstances.

All his thoughts that were not given to "the Wallmoden,"—the German *chère amie*, whom he had raised to the dignity of Countess of Yarmouth, after the precedents left by his royal father—were bestowed on objects of a martial character or tendency. George II. in his old age, seemed striving to recommend himself at the court of Venus by assuming the character of Mars. He had heard the battle's roar, and preferred it to Handel's most spirited chorus. He desired to be a great general—he wished to become a hero.

His Majesty was alone in his cabinet, which at this period of his history had all

the appearance of a small arsenal: every corner was filled with sabres, muskets, and halberts; helmets and military caps of different fashions were suspended from the walls, by the side of pictures of great battles, and diagrams of celebrated campaigns; models of pieces of ordnance were half concealed by maps, partly unrolled, of the countries in which the game of war was now being played; and a few books, half hid amongst a mass of despatches, letters, and military documents, were spread confusedly over a table, by which was placed a richly embroidered chair, surmounted by a royal crown.

The King was dressed in a field marshal's uniform—a dress he liked a vast deal better than his kingly robes—and with a grave and scrutinizing glance was standing near a window, examining the accoutrements of one of his best regiments. His heavy features, which had been rendered gloomy by regret for the loss of his Minister, lighted up now and then with an approving

smile, as he observed that the belt, or cartridge-box, or bayonet-sheath, was exactly what it ought to be.

A knock was heard at the door.

"Come in!" cried the King, without taking his eyes off the object he was examining with such intense interest.

One of the pages of the back stairs entered, and with the usual formalities announced that a painter, one Hogarth, waited in the ante-room, to have the honour of exhibiting to his Majesty his picture of the March of his Majesty's Guards to Finchley.

"Bicture!" exclaimed the King, who still adhered to his Westphalian pronunciation of English, "A bicture of my guards marging to Vinchley! Bring in der bicture, and let der bainter stay where he is!"

In a few seconds two pages entered the cabinet, bringing the production alluded to. His Majesty commanded them to place it in the light, and then with his hands behind him, stooping his body towards the chair on which the frame rested, he began to scru-

tinize it in the same manner he had just done the accoutrements.

The first object that attracted his attention, was one of the soldiers in the well-known sugar-loaf cap: he recognized the regimentals with a smile of approval; but whether it was the King expected the artist would have delineated his crack regiment engaged in some heroic enterprise, or fancied that the humour with which the subject was treated was intended to ridicule the military art, his Majesty's face suddenly assumed a tint as scarlet as his regimentals; and turning to the astonished pages, with a loud voice he bade them carry it away.

As they proceeded to execute the royal commands, they were indignantly bade to "tell der bainter to take away his drumpery, and not no more never bresume to garigadure his guards." With this ungracious message were added directions for Sir Robert Walpole to come to him directly he entered the palace.

The King returned to the examination of

his military accoutrements, muttering a prodigious anathema in German on the audacity of this English painter, Hogarth, in seeking to hold soldiers up to ridicule, and half inclined to have him tried by a court-martial. In due time his anger subsided, and then he was reminded that his old friend and counsellor was coming to take leave of him. This gave him very melancholy thoughts. He soon forgot the displeasure the March to Finchley had excited, in his grief at the approaching separation.

Presently the door opened, and the new-made Earl of Orford was announced. He entered—his good-humoured countenance impressed with as much sorrow as it was possible to express, with such very jovial features. For twenty years he had been a statesman—he had enjoyed the confidence of his Royal Master without interruption; and, in short, he had been sovereign in everything but name: for George II., satisfied with the Wallmoden, and the study of the art of war, willingly

left all the trouble of government to his able Minister. Now the great man was about to bid adieu for ever to all this greatness, and to a Master who had been so wonderfully indulgent. It required more philosophy than any statesman could be expected to possess—more, even, than could be claimed by the deeply disappointed philosopher of Battersea—to abandon without regret a state of things so exceedingly agreeable.

But if the favourite Minister was deficient in philosophy, his Royal Master was in a still more lamentable condition. Visions of endless trouble haunted him; he saw that he could no longer hope for the uninterrupted enjoyment of his two great sources of happiness; he had the fear before his eyes of never being safe from intrusion. What was to become of his army! and, oh, what was to become of the Wallmoden!

These questions presented themselves to the disturbed mind of the King, as he beheld the friendly face of his favourite.

Dropping with a cry of joy the gaiter of a grenadier, the button-holes of which he had been carefully counting, he hastened to meet his faithful counsellor, and grasped him affectionately by the hand. Lord Orford bent one knee to the ground, but the poor old King was too much overcome by his feelings to attend to ceremony. He fell on his neck, and absolutely cried like a child.

It would be doing the fallen Minister great injustice to state that this proof of sympathy from his sovereign did not affect him. His eyes were humid—they spoke of emotion—his heart was beating disturbedly, and from the same influence.

This was a curious spectacle: two old men—one a monarch, long believed to possess as little sensibility as sense—and the other his servant, who had obtained the reputation of being a mere machine for the service of the government, were weeping in each other's arms, displaying, under an influence that swept away the long accustomed barriers of ceremony, like a crumb-

ling mud-bank before an inundation of the sea, the presence of that touch of nature that not only "makes the whole world kin," but creates in human hearts a brotherhood more endearing even than that of birth.

CHAPTER XII.

AN ADVENTURE ON THE COAST.

ON the coast of Kent, opposite to the French shores, a natural cave had been formed in the cliff, of such extent as to make an excellent hiding-place, not only for a numerous band of smugglers, but for a vast quantity of goods which had been deposited there till an opportunity served for conveying them into the interior. The place had a singular aspect: innumerable kegs of spirits were heaped confusedly with

barrels of tobacco, and large packages of French manufactures—while here and there were hung cutlasses, blunderbusses, pistols, and boarding-pikes, each ready for use the very moment it was required.

A hundred years ago, and even much later, the smugglers on the coast were as numerous as they were daring. They were often assisted by the farmers of the neighbourhood, who of course found their profit in it; and the tradesmen were frequently, in some way or other, more or less engaged in the unlawful traffic. It was not unusual for a gang to be commanded by a person holding the position of gentleman—a small squire, who having wasted his patrimony in riotous indulgences, obtained the command of a vessel, and the assistance of a picked crew, and went on a trading voyage to France, Holland, or Spain, bringing back a valuable cargo, which he took particular care should never approach a Custom House.

Becoming bolder by success, and more skilful by experience, the amateur captain

would venture upon longer voyages; and it was not an uncommon thing for the bold smugglers to become equally bold pirates; and the reputation which had commenced with a successful run in a fast-sailing lugger from Rotterdam to Dover cliffs, often concluded with a tranquil sail into some secret bay in the island of Cuba, after a daring cruise in an armed schooner in the track of the merchant vessels trading to the West Indies.

These smugglers were equally obnoxious to the government in another way. They were the medium of communication between the disaffected Jacobites in England and the adherents of the Pretender abroad. Through their agency the leaders of the Jacobites were made acquainted with the projects of the exiled Stuarts, and in the same manner those unfortunate princes learned to what extent their followers in England were devoted to their cause.

Through their agency, also, many an expatriated gentleman, on whose head a price had been set, had been enabled to land in

England in concealment, had communicated with individuals known to be unfavourably disposed towards the existing government, and after having securely spread the seeds of disaffection in the land, had again gone on board some fast-sailing smuggler, and in a few hours would be in safety on the opposite coast.

In one of the caves to which we have just referred, two persons were sitting, evidently engaged in earnest discourse, in a foreign language. One was a female, rather above the medium height, but so wrapped up in a large coarse boat-cloak that her figure could not easily be defined; her companion was of the other sex, and his sleek visage and keen dark eye declared him a priest of the Roman faith, though he was disguised as a foreign pedlar.

What occasion two such persons could have there, in a cold moon-light night, was not very clear. They certainly were not smugglers—nor was it very likely they were customers—indeed, they looked of a

totally different class to the adventurous individuals from the interior, who sought the smugglers' cave upon speculation.

The female, apparently, had been listening to her companion with earnest attention, and, as he believed, with a good deal of amusement. It appeared that he had but just arrived in that part of the country, direct from London, and was pouring out the budget of intelligence he had picked up in the great city.

"Holy Mother!" he exclaimed with Catholic fervour, "it is a wonderful piece of good fortune! I know not anything that could have happened so favourable to our cause, as this downfall of Walpole."

"Then Sir Robert Walpole is no longer in the Usurper's service?" inquired his fair companion, earnestly.

"He has been sent about his business in the most summary way," said her informant, exultingly. "Deprived of all his employments, hurled from power, and stripped of his ill-got wealth; he has nothing

for it but to end the remnant of his days in ignominy, poverty, and disgrace—all glory be to God, and the blessed Virgin!”

“I am sorry for him, father,” replied the other, in a low voice.

“What, daughter! did I hear aright?” sharply inquired her associate, “Sorry for the disgrace of Sir Robert Walpole! Sorry for the overthrow of the greatest obstacle in the way of your King, and the most dangerous enemy to your parent! A Falkland sorry for the ruin of a Walpole? ’Tis incredible!”

“Father Michaeli!” said Miss Falkland, for there now could be no mistake as to her identity, “I trust I know my duty, both to my King and to my parent. Nevertheless, I cannot but regret that such a man as Sir Robert Walpole should be driven with disgrace from a position, no one who sought the service of the Elector of Hanover could have filled more worthily.”

“Santa Maria! what strange stuff is this!” cried the ecclesiastic, his face purpling with

rage. “Walpole—a rebel, a corrupt, profligate, tyrannical despot, who held nothing before his eyes but his own interests, and cared not how the wealth of the crown was squandered, so that sufficient of it went to the aggrandizement of his own family! I know not, daughter, what there can be in this man to call for your pity, unless it is because his hopeful son, whose character, by all accounts, is not more creditable than his father’s, is involved in the same ruin.”

“Father Michaeli!” exclaimed the young lady proudly, as she rose from her seat, “I think it proper to state to you, that your insinuation respecting myself is not more creditable to you than your charge against Mr. Walpole. You would have shewn more judgment, had you refrained from casting unworthy suspicions upon the daughter of Lord Falkland; you would at least have exhibited your charity, had you refrained from speaking harshly of a man who can no longer be his enemy—if, as I have every reason to believe, he has no longer either the

power or the inclination to injure him. What his son can have done to have excited your hostility, I know not—I only know, that according to common report, a man of purer honour or of higher talent than Mr. Horace Walpole is not easily to be found in the King's dominions."

Here was a change! When Arabella Falkland last met the gentleman she was now so warmly eulogizing, his position was as low in her estimation as it could possibly be. But she had thought a good deal since then—she had been convinced that she had done him injustice. There was something that was even still more in his favour. *Then*, Horace Walpole was the son of the most powerful man in Europe, and was the idol of popular acclamation; under such circumstances she could be as indignant as she pleased: but Horace Walpole was at the present moment nothing but the son of a disgraced favourite—his ambitious aspirations blown to the winds, and his pride humbled to the dust. Under these circum-

stances, not only she could not say—she would not hear a word to his disparagement.

Father Michaeli was a great deal astonished at the rebuke he had just heard. He had not forgotten several speeches that had proceeded from the same mouth, of a wonderfully opposite tendency. Another man might have remonstrated—another priest might have had recourse to more severe language. But the Padre Michaeli was a wise man, and an indulgent priest. He had known his patron's daughter from childhood; and preferred changing the subject, to continuing one that she thought disagreeable.

“Are you certain my father intends to cross the channel to-night?” Miss Falkland inquired, as she resumed her seat.

“Such was his Lordship's intention, if he found it could be done with safety,” was the reply; “matters of the greatest consequence have occurred in France, which renders a personal conference with you necessary, how-

ever dangerous, as such is highly essential to the success of the important undertaking in which his Lordship is engaged."

"At what hour are we to expect him?"

"At twelve: a large piece of sail-cloth hoisted on a pole—which lies ready for use in yonder corner of the cave—will give my Lord notice that you are here. He will, immediately on beholding this signal, jump into a boat and be rowed ashore. But his stay must be very brief; for as soon as his Lordship has acquainted you with what he desires you should learn, he must return to his vessel, and get back to France as quickly as he can."

Miss Falkland went to the opening of the cave where the light was strongest, and looked at a watch she wore in her dress. It was midnight.

"Quick, Father Michaeli! Let us hoist the signal!" she exclaimed.

The pole was a heavy one, but the daughter of Lord Falkland, with a zealous alacrity, set about assisting the priest in carrying

it from its hiding place out upon the sands. The sail-cloth was easily made fast to the top, and, by their united exertions, the pole was raised, and the base securely fastened in the sand. The temporary flag was rapidly unfurled, and flapped noisily in the wind. Father Michaeli feared the unusual sound might attract some straggling spy to the neighbourhood; and, knowing what his fate would be were he caught in his present occupation, requested his companion to return to the cave for his pistols.

Arabella at once departed on her errand.

She reached the cave, in which she remained some time before she could discover the object of her errand. When she quitted it, the sail was still flapping in the breeze, but a sight met her gaze that seemed to turn her blood to water. Her eye fell upon the forms of two soldiers in the peculiar uniform of the Grenadiers of George II., with fearful oaths and ribald jests driving the old priest into the sea, as they rushed upon him with fixed bayonets.

She stood like one transfixed, unable to move or speak. The shrieks of the victim, as the weapons of the brutal soldiers were thrust into his flesh to quicken his retreating steps to the waves that came bounding towards him, nerved her to desperation. She made a quick movement forward—but a fearful shriek and a heavy plunge soon assured her she had come too late.

Too late to save, but not too late to avenge, as his murderers quickly discovered; for on turning with a ferocious laugh to retrace their steps, their bayonets reeking with the blood of their victim, they were amazed at beholding a tall figure in a long cloak, with a face of deadly pallor, standing in their path, with pistols levelled at their heads. They gave one shout, and rushed on, with their steaming bayonets thirsting for a second victim.

Another moment, they would have borne her lovely body mangled to the ground; but when the points of their deadly steel almost touched her person, two quick flashes

were followed by as many sharp reports, and the two soldiers fell back on the sand, shot through the heart.

A few minutes afterwards, Lord Falkland landed with his boat's crew, and found his daughter supporting herself with one arm round the flag-staff, with a discharged pistol clenched in each hand, in a state of stupor, staring at the bodies of two soldiers weltering in their blood, extended within a few feet of her.

CHAPTER XIII.

LIKE MASTER, LIKE MAN.

WHEN the great dignitary of the Spanish Church dismissed Gil Blas from his service, for fulfilling his own wishes in pointing out to his attention a falling off in his powers of preaching, there was an example of one of the most universal of human failings. The ecclesiastic was too prejudiced in his own favour to submit to a criticism he had invited, and this prejudice is at the bottom or the top of all mundane affairs. Archbishops

are not more subject to it than the humblest of the priesthood, and Spain is as far from being the only country where it flourishes in undisturbed luxuriance. Let us inquire a little into the nature of this very catholic quality.

Prejudice is as much the result of habit as of education; and consists in an attachment to persons, opinions, or things, adopted without sufficient evidence of their value, and defended against every effort to disprove their inefficiency. With some, this goes by the name of partiality; but this is but a delusive *alias* to a quality in bad repute — like the more respectable designation which old offenders have recourse to in preference to their own.

Prejudice is so general, that the man or woman would deserve to be considered an eighth wonder, who should be found without it. It comes as natural to us as our arms and legs. We are early inoculated with its virus, and are pretty sure of having it diffused throughout our whole system. In

short, no adult can be perfectly unprejudiced, unless he unlearn all that has been taught him, and apply himself to the study of the truth with no other object than the general good.

Prejudices surround us at every period of life, and are not unfrequently carried with us to the grave. They are thrust down our throats with the pap-spoon—physic us in the common infirmities of our nature—and form as common an ingredient in our ordinary gratifications. Prejudice is universal: we have as much of it lolling in a carriage as dawdling behind a counter; and it is as conspicuously seen sitting in full state when on the woolsack, as trudging in rags along the road. We are as careful of it as our railway legislators are of their own interests. We carry it to church with the prayer-book, and bring it home with the text.

And yet, how we suffer for it! Suicides rush on death from prejudice—through the same influence, martyrs have been consumed at the stake. Juggernaut is not the only

idol under whose groaning chariot-wheels countless victims of prejudice have been immolated; and numberless are the pyres it has lighted, besides those of the Suttee. If we would see one of unusual extravagance, we may behold it in the brazen monster that has lately frightened all Piccadilly; if we choose it for its most trivial shape, we have nothing to do but to go to Tom Thumb.

We have it in every form. Wars are horrid prejudices—superstitions are silly prejudices—the Game Laws are tyrannical prejudices—and ordinances that give particular advantages to particular classes, are prejudices that are foolish, unprofitable, and unjust. It is only at the end of a lawyer's letter, when negotiating a settlement, that we are likely to find we can entertain a proposal "without prejudice."

People put all their faith in their prejudices, as if they hoped to be saved by them: like a ship's crew, who fancy themselves secure in the wildest storm, because there is a child's caul in the captain's cabin. You

may tread on a person's toes, and may get off with an apology: but tread on his prejudices, and you are a lost man. This hostile influence once exerted, it extends itself, like an ill weed as it is, so rapidly, and takes such deep root in the soil, that there is no getting it out, no prophesying where it will cease. If our neighbour has excited it—no unusual occurrence—it spreads to his family, to his friends, and to his servants. His favourite dog becomes an ill-conditioned cur, and his wife's cat bears the most discreditable of feline characters.

If there was one person in the world to whom this sinister influence applied more strongly than any other, it was to the disgraced Minister's old and faithful steward. When he heard that his master was dismissed, he resolutely determined not to believe it. The thing was altogether unnatural. It would be much more likely that Sir Robert would dismiss the King, than that the King would dismiss Sir Robert. Oswald, too, had for so long a period, as a confidential domes-

tic of the Minister, been connected with the State, that he believed himself to be as complete a fixture in it as his master; and when he had orders to quit Whitehall, he felt as much wronged as if he had been deprived of a rightful inheritance.

All the time he superintended the removal from the official residence he had occupied for such a length of time, he could regard the change only as resulting from a sort of earthquake, which rendered the place unsafe. Every now and then he held up his hands, or shook his head, or displayed some of those telegraphic signs which people of his class refer to, when subjected to some sudden shock, which perplexes them beyond the power of words to express.

He had become so habituated to a ministerial atmosphere, that it seemed as though he could breathe in no other. Indeed, his nature, by this protracted service, like the dyer's hand, had contracted in some respect the tone of what it worked in. It was not unusual for him, towards his subordinates, to assume

something of the bearing of a First Lord of the Treasury towards his clerks and secretaries; and there were occasions when, in his own "Cabinet," as he styled a little sitting-room in the official residence that was set apart for his particular use, he affected, in the society of a favoured friend, a little of that diplomatic phraseology with which his ears had been made familiar through the medium of the keyhole, during official conferences and ministerial interviews.

The ingenious and ingenuous Fibbs he had selected as his sole friend and scholar; for he was much in the habit of opening before the travelled valet the vast store of his experience, and seemed anxious to initiate him in all the mysteries of secret service, the flummery of embassies, and the rignarole of negotiation. If Fibbs was not thoroughly qualified to become a first-rate statesman, or prepared to enter upon the duties of an ambassador to a foreign court, it was not the fault of his communicative friend. We are obliged to acknowledge that these lessons

were not entirely without effect; the ingenious Fibbs fancied he could shine in Parliament; and more than once, at their weekly supper at the Admiral Vernon, was heard to address the President as "Mr. Speaker."

The two worthies were again together. They were sitting in close conference in the snug parlour of the Admiral Vernon, smoking long pipes, and drinking purl out of tall glasses; and whether it was that they had drunk so much, or that they had smoked so much, had talked so much, or thought so much, their looks were much less sober than usual. The old man's wig, too, was almost off his head—and the dress of the travelled valet betrayed signs of a carelessness respecting his appearance, very uncommon in a gentleman's gentleman of his pretensions.

A hundred years ago, drinking was very much the fashion, in high places as well as in low. While their Lords got drunk on claret, it was customary for their servants to get equally drunk on purl. The decanter

and the tankard were had recourse to on all occasions. If a gentleman won a wager, or lost his wife, he made it a point to drink himself under the table; if he held a prize in the lottery, or heard of the failure of his banker, he felt equally bound to render it necessary for his servants to carry him to bed.

Inebriety being so respectable, we need make no apology for our friends having followed the fashion. Their reason for being in such a state was, however, rather an unusual one; for they had been brought together by a common sympathy in the disgrace of the head of the House of Walpole, and they had been encouraging each other in washing it down, as they communicated their sentiments on the awful state of things which had led to such a catastrophe.

Notwithstanding that Fibbs was so much in the habit of giving the reins to his tongue, the volubility of his senior, impelled as it was by his overwhelming sense of wrong, left him scarcely an opportunity

of opening his mouth—indeed he found himself unable to finish a single sentence.

“I have given in my resignation,” said the old man, with a most statesman-like gravity, after he had replenished the glasses, and drunk to his companion with the usual ceremonies. “The club will now, I s’pose, call to the helm that old rascal M’Foxie. As for myself, I have done with state affairs. I have no intention whatsoever of meddling with politics again. Things is come to such a dreadful pass, that nothing but revolution, and anarchy, and the utter disorganization of society, can be expected. When such scum as that sneaking Scotchman has the conducting of our affairs, it ’s high time for them as has a regard for themselves to get out of the whole concern as quick as they can.”

“A very necessary conclusion, Old Cock!” exclaimed the other, who was much the *freshest* of the two. “As we said at Cambridge, its arguing from right premises to—”

"But we retires with honour, Fibbs," continued the steward of the discarded Minister.

"Of course we does," readily responded his friend, trying, as he smoked his pipe, to look extremely consoled. "Honour, as I said to the charming Madame Pomme de Terre—"

"They can't deprive us of the commendation of our own consciences," he added. "We have always stood up for Church and State—we have supported the Monarchy—we have advocated the best interests of the Nation."

"Hear! hear!" cried Fibbs.

"We haven't obtained no improper grants—we an't profited by no monopolies—we never took no advantage of nobody—and always kept ourselves within the pale of the constitution."

"To be sure we did."

"And now we quits public life altogether. We abandons speeches and protocols, and an ungrateful country—we bids adieu to the

tumults of party, and the slanders of political rivals—we quits the stormy atmosphere of St. Stephen's, and the false friendships of a Court, for the pure air of our native Houghton, and the solid pleasures of Norfolk turkeys, Norfolk dumplings, and Norfolk sausages."

"*Fortunate senex*!—as we said at Eton," cried Fibbs, in ecstasy. "*Hic inter*—"

"But the time will come—there's not a doubt on't—it's obvious to any one who regards the unnatural aspect of the political horizon—the time will come, when the vessel of the State, tossed to and fro in the stormy waves of faction, will want the services of an experienced pilot to rescue it from the quicksands of revolution; *then*, mayhap, some folks may remember the hand that for twenty mortal years directed the helm, the voice that commanded the crew, the eye that discovered the hidden dangers of the navigation, and the head that found a resource for every difficulty, a refuge from every peril, a security in every danger—*then*

they may think of recalling the man who had served them so long and well, and got so little perquisites, to bring them back to safety and honour; but if *I'd* ever take any manner of notice of sich a horrid set of ungrateful wretches, as after so long a service had infamously discharged me without a character—if I'd ever work for them again under any circumstances whatsoever, I'M BLOWED!"

The emphasis given to the last expressive words was accompanied with such a prodigious thump on the table, that it made the tankard, the candlestick, and the glasses, jump in a style that very much threatened their centre of gravity.

"That 's my *ultimatum*," added the late attendant at the Treasury, as he proceeded to relight his pipe.

"*Non può far meglio*, as we said in Italy," replied his friend, striving to refill his own glass, in which he contrived to pour as much outside as in. "By the way, that reminds me of a mighty interesting conversa-

tion I had with the fascinating Baroness Maccaroni, who said to me, ‘Signor Fibbs,’ says she, ‘*idolo mio*,’ says she, in her soft way, ‘I’—”

“I hates ingratitude!” sternly exclaimed the discarded Minister’s faithful domestic; “I loathes it. It ’s worse than board wages, or a Methodist housekeeper. And ingratitude to so unrivalled a statesman—so matchless a Minister—so incomparable a man as Sir Robert Walpole, an’t to be tolerated in a Christian community.”

“And we *won’t* tolerate it, old fellow!” cried the ingenious Fibbs, making an effort to preserve his equilibrium, as his head kept falling forward, with a decided inclination for the sanded boards.

“When I thinks of the merits of that great man,” resumed the other, with increased solemnity, “when I calls to mind the extent of his services, the vastness of his talents, his marvellous eloquence, his wonderful skill, his extraordinary knowledge of our affairs at home and abroad, and compares

him with the sneaking Pelhams who betrayed him—the crafty Bolingbroke, who plotted against him—the hypocritical Pulteney, who strove to supplant him—and the rest of the worthless crew who joined in hunting him out of his place, I own my very blood boils again such injustice, and I am eager to publish my protest against a proceeding so injurious to the best interests of the country.”

“Hurrah for Walpole!” shouted the excited Fibbs.

“We ’ll drink his Honour’s health,” said the old man, rising to reach the tankard, and parting company with his wig, “and then we must make the best of our ways home, as it ’s getting late, and we starts for Houghton the first thing in the morning.”

“Drink his health? Of course we ’ll drink his health,” repeated the other, taking up his empty glass, which he had just before upset, and, placing it bottom upwards, was about to pour the liquor on it, when his soberer friend interposed, and filled it for him.

“Upstanding, with three times three,” exclaimed Oswald, as he held out his glass; “Here’s our new Lord, and old master, Sir Robert Walpole, now Earl of Orford! Health and happiness to his Honour wherever he goes, and confusion to his enemies!”

“Confusion to him wherever he goes,” slowly repeated the travelled valet, as he made an attempt to rise from his seat, “and health and happiness to his enemies.”

“Hurrah!”

“Hurrah!”

“Hurrah—Hurrah—Hurrah!”

“Hurrah—Hurrah—Hurrah!”

“One cheer more!” cried the tipsy steward, after the usual quantity of noise had been performed by his friend, with a marvellous unsteady footing, and with the wine running over a glass held nearly at right angles with his arm.

“One cheer more, Old Cock—as I said to the exquisite Madame Pomme—”

His final attempt at a sentimental revelation was cut short by a vociferous shout

from his companion, as he whirled his glass over his head; in which he joined with a similar demonstration, that, however, had the effect of sending his glass flying to one end of the room, while he measured his length at the other.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ALL ’S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.”

IN a small chamber, rudely furnished, apparently belonging to some cottage, not far from the sea shore, two persons were seated on a large sea-chest, that took up a considerable portion of the space left vacant by the fishing-nets, the cutlass and pistols, the dried haddocks, the spirit-keg, the boat-sail, and the pair of oars, that so incommodiously furnished it. Both were closely wrapt in boat-cloaks, yet, despite of such

disguise, it soon became obvious that neither was a regular resident with the half-fisherman half-smuggler proprietor of the place—indeed, the bright clear face, proud and pale, that rose above the coarse cloak worn by one of them, like a planet over a dark cloud, disclosed the features of Arabella Falkland, and it very soon became evident that her companion was her father.

“Our time is precious, my child,” he exclaimed, as he gently drew her towards him and kissed her forehead; “the boat waits to carry me back to the ship, and I believe I cannot return too soon, for the luckless homicide of the two soldiers of the Usurper—richly as they merited their fate, by their unprovoked slaughter of our martyred Padre—will no doubt cause a considerable stir in the next town, where their regiment is quartered; and it would go ill with me, as well as with the cause we are so earnestly endeavouring to forward, were any of their detachments to take me prisoner.”

“God forbid!” she murmured fervently.

“I shall not fail to make the Prince aware of the incalculable service you have rendered him. You see, my love, I did not overrate your ability when I first proposed this dangerous service; but I will own, you have far exceeded my most sanguine expectations.”

Miss Falkland smiled faintly at her father's eulogy; but there did not seem in her features the expression of any excessive satisfaction. Perhaps the approaching parting with her parent took away all sense of gratification. Perhaps her spirit was rendered more melancholy than usual by the recent slaughter of her attendant, and the dreadful scene that immediately followed. Her thoughts, however, appeared just then to have wandered to a different quarter.

“I have beheld our beloved Falkland Court,” she said, with a sweet and solemn interest in the tones of her most musical voice. “I have seen the owls flying from its deserted casements, and heard the linnet warble in its porch. If it is not permitted that I should live there, I trust I may have the pri-

vilege of being placed among its honoured dead!"

"Rest assured, my child, that Falkland Court shall soon be our own again, never more to be divided from us," he replied earnestly. "But there is no time now to talk of this."

"Have you no message for his Royal Highness?" after a short pause, inquired Lord Falkland, tenderly.

The young lady hesitated; she smiled; but her smile was still melancholy.

"The Prince will be disappointed if I bring back with me no communication from his most trusted—from his most skilful agent."

"Tell his Royal Highness," she replied gravely, "I pray daily for his success; and that he may always count on my best exertions towards obtaining it."

His Lordship appeared not quite satisfied with this message; but it was neither time nor place for remonstrance. A peculiar whistle warned him to hasten his departure.

He rose from his seat, and for a few seconds they were locked in an affectionate embrace. Another whistle of a totally different kind made both pause. It was a signal of some menacing danger. Miss Falkland stood in an attitude of profound attention—with an alarmed look, certainly—but evidently with a spirit ready for any emergency. She well knew that her father was an outlaw, and that, were he to fall into the hands of the existing government, his life would be in imminent danger. She knew, too, that he had just furnished her with papers which, if discovered, would not only forfeit their own lives, but would be the ruin of the noblemen and gentlemen she had induced to join in the conspiracy, and would be the total destruction of the grand enterprise the young Prince of Wales had so much at heart.

A stealthy footstep was heard approaching. Presently the little window was thrown open, and a rough, weather-beaten face was thrust into it.

“Make sail, your Honour, or the land-sharks ’ll grab ye afore ye can get afloat,” exclaimed a gruff voice. “The red-coats be bearing down upon us, and we shall be obliged to fight or strike. So if so be your Honour doesn’t mean to knock under, you’d better be prepared for close quarters. Hist! there goes the Cap’n’s signal for all hands. The lady had better come with us; but there arn’t no time to lose.”

One hurried embrace was all they permitted each other; for both were well aware of the peril in which they were involved. The latch was lifted, and they were outside the hut, apparently in the outskirts of a straggling village; but the night was so dark, though the moon did occasionally afford such glimpses of the huge cliffs before them, whenever she burst from the dense masses of cloud that hid the sky, as allowed of a very imperfect knowledge of the neighbourhood.

Lord Falkland was well armed, and sternly resolved not to be taken alive. The prox-

imity of his daughter embarrassed him; it seemed that a desperate contest was about to take place, in which her young life might be sacrificed. Yet it was equally hazardous to leave her behind, as it was known that the soldiers were approaching in that direction; and her liberty was of the most vital importance to the Jacobite cause at that moment. If she could be got safely into the boat, it would be easy to land her on another part of the coast. With this idea he hurried her along by the side of his guide. They kept an unbroken silence as they cautiously descended the cliff. Suddenly the man stopped, and they did the same. He appeared to be listening. A whistle was again heard, followed by straggling shots, and then a heavy fire, as of musketry.

“Push on, your Honour!” cried the smuggler, loosening a pistol from his belt with one hand, as he drew a cutlass with the other; “There ’ll be hot work afore long. Lots of our friends be hereabouts, so the red-coats are like to have enough to do.

Howsomever, I wishes the lady was safe somewhere else, for it an't no place for women-folk."

Miss Falkland calmly bade him be under no alarm for her. It was plain they must reach the boat, at any hazard; and all she wished was to get there as speedily as possible.

"Ay, ay, Miss," answered the man roughly, unaware that her sole object in desiring dispatch was to place her father in safety. "But with breakers around us, we an't such lubbers as to carry too much sail. Howsomever, if I bean't mistaken, there 's the boat as is waiting to put ye aboard the 'Lively Sally;' there she floats in the little bay down below."

Lord Falkland and his daughter glanced in the required direction, and readily discovered the buoyant cutter that had landed him in the morning. Their guide now put his fingers into his mouth, and blew a whistle so piercingly shrill, that Miss Falkland was startled by it. There could be no

doubt it was heard in the proper quarter, for the crew, who had previously been resting on their oars, now pulled, with lusty strokes, in the direction of the shore.

“Now, your Honour! now, Miss!” whispered the man; “Be pleased to follow me down this here narrow path. You can hear by the firing that there’s sharp work going on: but if so be our Cap’n be strong enough, he’ll be able to keep the rascally lobsters in play till you be out of their reach.”

There was a contingency in this, that neither father nor daughter liked. Their nerves, however, were strung to meet the apparent danger, and without saying a word they proceeded to follow their guide down the difficult and very tortuous path he had selected. The necessity of carefully minding their footing, for some time took off a good deal of their attention—nevertheless, both believed that the firing was rapidly approaching them: the roaring of the sea in some measure consoled them for this. They were

descending a steep cliff, and the boisterous waves were almost at their feet.

'The moon now shone out, and rendered their descent less hazardous. They reached the bottom in safety, and found themselves on a soft sandy beach, within a few yards of the sea; within, too, a trifling distance of the friends they were so anxious to join. But the light that appeared so friendly, was full of danger. As they reached the sands, they beheld a confused multitude—whose shouts and execrations they could distinctly hear—approaching them. They soon discovered that it was a large body of smugglers, in full retreat, yet keeping up a running fire upon a detachment of soldiers and Custom-House officers, who were pursuing. It was evident the authorities were aware of some unusual movement on this part of the coast, which was crowded with a lawless Jacobite population, and had determined on making an important seizure. The officer in command of the detachment of soldiers had discovered the boat, as well

as the fugitives making towards it, whom he rightly judged to be persons he ought to secure. He hurried on his men to intercept them. But the cliffs seemed alive with smugglers, whom the firing had attracted to the spot, and they were rapidly descending every possible path to reinforce their comrades.

It was a position of extraordinary danger for the Falklands. Every step they took towards their friends, carried them nearer to their enemies; and the same wind that brought them the encouraging shouts of the boatmen, wafted to them the clear command of the King's Officer to seize their persons. The struggle was evidently becoming more fierce—bullets were whistling over their heads, and the loud clashing of the steel was drowned in the wild roar of musketry.

“Now, your Honour!” cried the guide, “we shall be in the midst of the fight in half a second. But you mind nothing but getting yourself and the lady safe aboard. I and my mates 'll look arter the red coats.”

They were soon surrounded by stragglers from amongst the retreating smugglers, bearing their wounded, who urged them to quicken their steps. Lord Falkland rushed forward with his daughter—a few yards brought him to the water-side, on a piece of jutting cliff, a little above the sea; the fight raged around him with a maddening fury—oaths, execrations, the flashing of pistol-shots, and the clashing of swords, rung in his ears.

“Seize that traitor! Surrender, in the name of the King,” cried the officer, who, though fighting furiously, had never lost sight of the fugitives.

“Down with the lubbers!” exclaimed their guide, and made a spring forward to join in the *melée*, in which he was soon as actively engaged as the boldest of his comrades.

Lord Falkland arrived at the head of the boat. He turned round to lift his daughter in, when he felt himself seized by the brawny arms of two of the boatmen, and she was shoved off amid the cheers of her crew.

“Fire!” shouted the King’s Officer, directing the attention of his men to the attempted escape. Arabella Falkland heard the quick rattle of the muskets, and the sharp clicks of the locks; and as the smugglers divided to avoid the coming discharge, she saw the line of deadly tubes pointed in the direction in which she stood.

The men hesitated when they discovered a lady, her cloak having fallen down, standing pale, yet tranquil and self-possessed, in the line of their fire; and the smugglers stood still, from a general sense of her danger. In a moment, the young officer with his drawn sword had dashed aside his men’s guns, and before the smugglers had recovered from their surprise, he had led the young lady into the centre of his detachment. A fire was then opened upon the fast receding boat, but it was irregular, and apparently did no mischief, for it was answered with a cheer, as the rowers shot by a bend of the cliff that placed them completely out of danger.

Whether it was that the smugglers were satisfied with what they had effected, or were fearful Miss Falkland might be killed, or were alarmed by the approach of another detachment of the same regiment that had taken a different road, they gave no further opposition to the troops, and in a few minutes had all dispersed to their homes.

On reaching a place of security with his fair prisoner, the commanding officer was very much puzzled what to do with her. His handsome features wore an expression of considerable perplexity, mingled with a deal of arch humour, when, after summoning the young lady into his presence, he beheld before him the niece of his old acquaintance Lady Furbelow, and the mistress of his friend and cousin Horace Walpole. Colonel Conway was under the impression that the person in whose company he had seen her, was one of the innumerable admirers it was natural for a young lady of her attractions to possess;

and he believed it was no very heinous crime for such a young lady to witness the departure of her lover, even if the gentleman proved to be a desperate Jacobite. He had no warrant for her apprehension, and as she had done nothing against the laws, he had no authority to detain her.

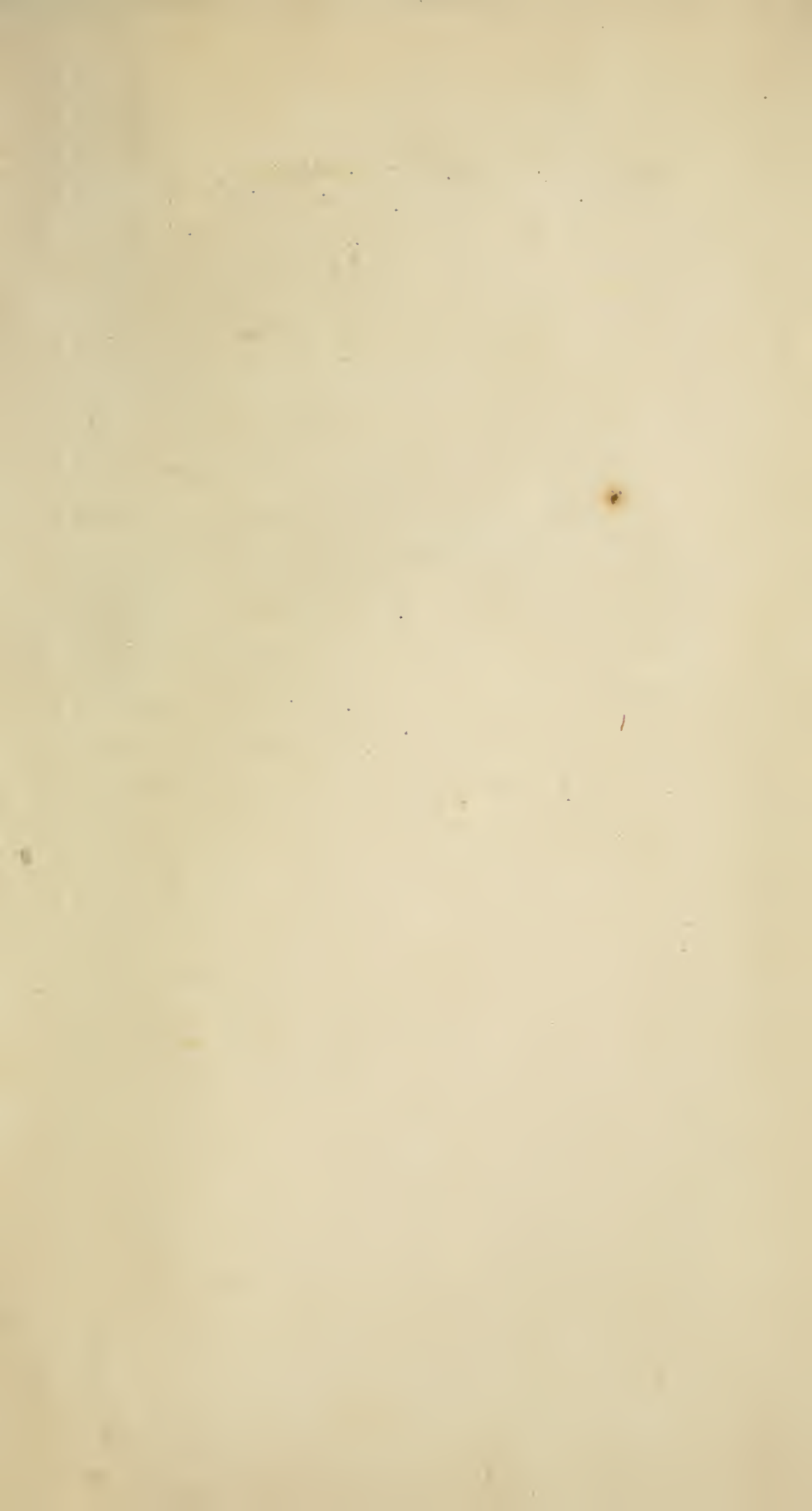
This, in a particularly gallant speech, the handsome Colonel thought proper to lament extremely—in some respects, he said, on his own account, but mostly on account of a near and dear friend of his, whom he knew to be the most devoted of her slaves. Miss Falkland was quite alive to the very critical position in which she stood. She carried about her documents, the discovery of which would ruin every distinguished Jacobite in England. She was therefore desirous of keeping her captor in good humour. She did not fail to make the necessary inquiries after this devoted slave. At first she exhibited a little astonishment, on hearing the name of her lover, and possibly more incredulity; but one inquiry leading to

another, and entertaining no doubt of the sincerity of her informant, the warm praises of his affectionate kinsman had their natural effect.

Colonel Conway handed Miss Falkland into a chaise, with no heavier penalty for having been mixed up with such monstrous improper company, than listening to an assertion he had several times repeated to her, that he always "looked on the bright side of things," and trusted, notwithstanding her unpleasant adventure, that she did the same.

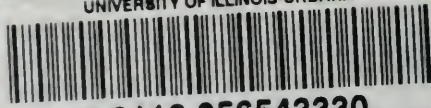
She fervently assured him she then felt the fullest appreciation of such a practice.

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